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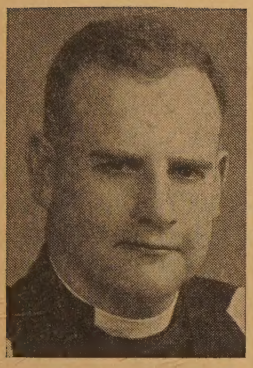
The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching



Charles D. Kean:

Penitence and Love

John R. Bodo • Christ and Crowds
Lawrence L. Gruman • The Beat Generation
Edward W. Warner • The Heresy of Joy
J. Stanley Barlow • What Kind of Faith?
G. Lynn Myers • Something New

SIDNEY E. MEAD
MIDWAY UPON THE JOURNEY

VOL. XXXI, No. 3 MARCH 1960

The Pulpit

Founded 1929 by Charles Clayton Morrison as a journal of contemporary preaching.

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AN ANNOUNCEMENT

ON MARCH 1 Kyle E. Haselden, minister of the Baptist Temple of Charleston, West Virginia, will become editor of The Pulpit and managing editor of *The Christian Century*. Dr. Haselden was graduated from Furman University (A.B.) and Colgate Rochester Divinity School (B.D.) and is an honorary D.D. of Morris Harvey College in Charleston. He has been minister of Baptist churches in Yonkers, New York, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Rochester, New York, in addition to the Baptist Temple of Charleston where he has served for five years. Throughout his ministry of twenty-two years, he has been active in city councils of churches and in state ecumenical activities. In 1958 he gave the Rauschenbusch lectures at Colgate Rochester and last year the revised lectures were published by Harper as *The Racial Question in Christian Perspective*. Harold A. Bosley, chairman of the board of trustees of the Christian Century Foundation, said of him: "In Dr. Kyle E. Haselden we are certain we have found the man for our work. We are confident that he will take his place in and make his own unique contribution to the tradition of leadership we are accustomed to expect from *The Christian Century* and The Pulpit."

HAROLD E. FEY
President,
The Christian Century Foundation.

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

OLUME XXXI | MARCH 1960 | No. 3

Memo:

THE announcement on the preceding page will alert our readers to the change in leadership coming to this journal with its next issue. We certainly delight in the prospect of Mr. Haselden's finding an invigorating and fruitful ministry in the special service of his colleagues through The Pulpit. This event also means that I shall be departing this office and its intriguing responsibilities and privileges. Leaving any substantial enterprise inevitably invites reflection on what it has all meant and leads to the pulling together of observation into comment. Sharing in the make-up of a magazine which has the broad concern of intelligible discourse on God and the world is hardly likely to leave one short of things to say; the problem, of course, is to select from a number of possibilities the category which best tells one's response to "all those manuscripts." Given that mind given me, the focus is clear: What excites and bothers me most about contemporary homiletics comes under the heading of "preaching as art."

Being no angel, I will rush right in. For the most part, I cannot help but agree with a friend's forthright declaration that "preaching is a lost art." Since there is no apparent subsiding of preaching as an *activity,* the statement must involve distinctions other than sheer quantity of occasions. These distinctions admittedly are much easier to feel than they are to define, and seeking after their elusive precision can cause no end of despair. Still, the charge — "preaching is a lost art" — has enough ring of truth to drive us to the considerable effort necessary for a deeper understanding of what preaching as an art may be.

One of the assumptions which contributes to the making of such a problem (an assumption which I take to be apparent in many manuscripts) is the point of view which holds that preaching is not supposed to be an art anyway. Here I must disagree, but with qualification. Art is not all that preaching is, or the only way of talking about preaching, or the only concern involved in preaching. My point is — and now I can be emphatic — that art is a crucial dimension of preaching, without which homiletics in its fundamental meaning as well as sermons in their particular forms are seriously diminished, even rendered ineffectual.

The theological presuppositions which invigorate this concern are, I think, classical Christian affirmations. Religious meaning is ultimate meaning; all meaning is related to ultimate meaning. Theology's concern, therefore, is for "all of life under ultimate concern," not just for the development and propagation of traditional doctrines and familiar time-tested symbols. Art is related to theology inescapably as life and as the communicative function without which doctrine is impotent; this double relationship means that art serves both a prophetic function, exerting a tension against specific theologies, and a priestly function in the liberation of meaning and grace. Alfred North Whitehead in *Process and Reality* has said: "The canons of art are merely the expression, in specialized forms, of the requisites for depth of experience." If religion may be defined as the dimension of depth in any and all of life, art is the expression of that dynamic depth in an arresting, attention-seizing moment.

Paul Tillich in his lectures on the History of Christian Thought states that "reality precedes thought; thought shapes reality." Paralleling this, art precedes theology and theology shapes art. Another way of putting it is that "art is the form of revelation and revelation is the substance of art." As a great player not only expresses the game he plays and affects the outcome of the games in which he plays but also determines to some extent the developing nature of the game itself, so does art affect and lead in theological development. As the game in its dynamic structure liberates the player to play at all, so theology gives the setting and the opportunity of perceptive seriousness to art. The demands of artistry can be seen in any substantial game and in any serious human discipline. It is hard to see how one could expect less for preaching.

One example of a basic necessity to all poetic communication which can and should inform preaching is the concept of "fluency." John Ciardi, poetry editor of *The Saturday Review of Literature,* speaks to the point: "Fluency is the ability to receive more than one meaning, impression, stimulus, call it what you please — at the same time. Analysis must always fumble and be long-winded because it must consider those multiple

(Continued on page 31)

The Shared Confidence of God's Acceptance Encourages Us to Want to Be Different

Penitence and Love

By Charles D. Kean

ASH Wednesday is the church's great penitential day. Penitence is, indeed, a note of the Christian life every day, but we need special times and places to bring home to us in dramatic form that which becomes so routine that it has no force in our lives. Ash Wednesday we remember consciously before God that, "We have erred and strayed like lost sheep. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done." And there is nobody for whom these words are out of place.

On Ash Wednesday we are called upon to face up most seriously to the contradictions and conflicts within our own hearts, and the disruption of relationships between ourselves and God and between ourselves and other people. We are called upon to face up to the sins of omission and commission which mark all of us.

But Ash Wednesday is only fully meaningful for Christians. We confess our faults as Christians. Everybody needs to have his moments of honesty with himself and contrition for his mistakes and misdeeds, but for Christians there is a perspective available which makes this confession not only more complete, but in the last analysis more possible.

We confess our sins to God, knowing in advance that there is a climate of love which makes it possible for us to be honest with ourselves and loving and forgiving to other people, and likewise to enable us to receive their love and forgiveness in return. Reflecting the ancient faith of the church down through the ages, the Ash Wednesday Collect puts it: "Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made and dost forgive the sins of all those who are truly penitent."

It is precisely because we start with our faith that God loves us, not so much for what we do or don't do, but because we are the children of his love that dare to look at the sordid and broken aspects of our lives and our relationships. There has to be a chance of forgiveness to make me bold enough to confess — not just to admit reality, but to want things different, to want myself to be a different kind of person.

We know something of this from our relationships with our parents and our own children, and indeed from the more intimate kinds of deep friendship with people to whom we may not be related by blood. It is one thing to admit our faults — circumstances may force us to do that against our will, and the result is not penitence but the feeling of being trapped and therefore angry and rebellious. It is quite another thing to confess our sin in the prior assurance that we matter more for who we are than for what we have done. This does not actually make it easier to take. It may make it harder because pain is the result of outraged love. But it does make it possible, and without the possibility there can be neither cleansing nor healing.

Climate of Love

The Christian faith states, the Ash Wednesday theme reiterates — this climate of love has already been provided. As St. John's Gospel puts it: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life." And St. Paul says it this way: "For God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Here is our confidence. We may not be worth much in our own eyes when we stop to look at the facts about ourselves. The world in which we are involved may be in a terrible mess to which we contribute through thought and action. But God sets a higher value on us than we can set upon ourselves, and accepting God's value we dare to be penitent.

I am sorry in one way that both the General Confession and the Lord's Prayer speak of sins and not sin. The real problem of life is in our basic

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titude which is, indeed, reflected in what we do don't do. But the heart of the matter is somehere else than in specific misdeeds of omission nd commission.

Sin is primarily that attitude toward life in hich we feel that we are the center of the universe that the sun, moon and stars revolve around our lf-concern. Nobody holds such a view intellecually — not at least in so many words. But all of s are continually tempted to feel that we are priarily responsible to ourselves and to nobody or othing else.

Alternating Results

This basic attitude of sin leads to two alternatng results and all of us have had much experience ith both. On the one hand and most obviously, ne world and everything and everybody in it exist support us in our estimate of our own imporance. This leads to using people as things — and ll of us on occasion use even those to whom we are ost attached: our husbands, our wives, our children, our closest friends, our business associates, as they existed primarily to serve our needs. We re tempted to push other people around. We are empted to take advantage of situations, usually nding good reasons for doing so. We become asertive and aggressive and play the role of God — t least to ourselves, since others usually will not uy this from us completely.

There is no need to illustrate how this side of ne basic sinful attitude disrupts our relationships ith God and with each other. Suffice it to say hat prayer becomes meaningless — a pious, if not agical routine giving neither peace nor purpose, hile heart-to-heart communication breaks down etween people who may be otherwise very close o each other.

But there is also the other side of the picture. in may lead us to hate ourselves because we find urselves so inadequate at making life turn out to e the way we think it ought to be. This is harder o deal with but isn't it just as real and just as much part of the problem? Indeed, some of our aggresiveness and self-assertiveness may well be the result f inner frustrations which we take out on other eople rather than come to grips with the contraliction in our own hearts.

In any event, there is that aspect of human ature in which we are tempted to hate ourselves, o put too low a value on our own personhood. nstead of playing God indirectly, we do so by everse. We have moments when we think of ourelves as such heels, such bums, such wastes of time, hat nobody — not even God — can really care for s at all. These feelings still place us at the center f the universe, since our self-concern is our most mportant conscious awareness. Thus frustration, iscouragement, depression become ways by which e become irresponsible to God, to other people and to ourselves. And prayer turns inward and defeats itself, while relationships with other people fail to bring any joy.

Here is the problem of sin — common to all mankind, yet quite personal with each of us — self-assertiveness and self-hatred as two sides of a coin. And until both are dealt with, life cannot be fully meaningful. We can neither accept ourselves nor other people. We cannot forgive ourselves or other people. We cannot love ourselves, in the sense Jesus meant when he said, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," nor love or be loved by other people.

This picture of sin is not the complete picture of our lives, but it is part of the picture — hence Ash Wednesday and Lent. We are called upon today to face the realities, not simply as problems, but as that part of life which God's love desires to heal. God's love breaks through the walls of isolation which divide our lives and separate us from God and from each other. Because we are loved, we can dare to admit what normally we would hide as far as possible from our own consciousness, and move forward in the faith that sets us free.

New Awareness

Ash Wednesday is the church's great penitential day, and therefore it is a day of hope. Through God's help we can face the cause of that which so often separates us from him, from each other and from ourselves. We have the confidence of being loved, even though we often do unloveable things on the one hand, and often think ourselves unloveable on the other. And in this awareness, we can face the reality of God's forgiveness and find newness of life.

We began this service by saying together the General Confession. There is a great strength and peace in saying this together. God's love for men is mediated by men and through men. It is much easier to do something requiring courage if we are in the fellowship of others going the same way with the same goal. You help me to make my confession as honest and humble as possible, and I in my way help you. You reinforce my confidence in the prior love of God and I reinforce yours. My tendencies to aggressive self-assertiveness are partly dealt with because I have your support, and I trust the same is true for you. My tendencies to self-hatred and irresponsible withdrawal from life are at least partly overcome because you remind me of God's love, and again I trust the same is true for you.

Ash Wednesday begins another Lent. May our observance of this holy season rest on a shared confidence of God's acceptance, forgiveness and love for each of us and for us all together, so that in the strength of this confidence we can face our divided lives and a divided world with both honesty and hope.

By Sidney E. Mead

MIDWAY UPON

MY title is taken from the first line of Dante's "Hell." Back of what I have to say is the feeling or apprehension that after a retarded childhood, a prolonged adolescence, a higher education delayed for ten years beyond "normal" and a problematical maturity, I have reached "middle age."

Middle age is not a matter of chronological age, except perhaps to those completely devoid of imagination and gifted with a computing machine where feeling and fancy ought to be. Dante, probably out of deference to the Psalmist's "three score and ten years" as man's allotment of time, described age thirty-five as "midway upon the journey of our life." But it seems obvious that to him, as to me, middle age is really a psychosomatic condition that comes, if at all, with a "shock of recognition" to be sure, but regardless of age. I say "if at all" because this feeling or condition of being middle aged may not hit some people at all, perhaps because it is not as spectacularly mysterious as birth or as certain as death. We have all known or read of people who lived more than the three-score-years-and-ten, and did great works too, in a perennial childhood and youth. Others, alas, seem to be born weary and old and have no middle age because they are never really young.

I am now talking to and about those who have or will become conscious of middle age. This consciousness usually comes as a shock, especially to very practical and rational individuals who assume that by taking thought they can plan for everything, including man's history. The shock is that of being bewildered — bewildered because while on the one hand this experience was unplanned for, on the other hand it is recognized as the natural culmination of a process that had been going on for a long time.

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It may come, for example, with the feeling that stairs are steeper than they used to be, that newspaper print is smaller by the year, that people do not speak as clearly or loudly as they once did, that clothing laid aside for a short time shrinks very rapidly. To some people the shock may come when they realize that all policemen look like boys, that the doctors at the clinic sprout only fuzz on their chins, and the girls in white who draw the blood for their tests ought still to be in high school. Sometimes a crisis is reached with the first pair of bifocals, or with the first plate, or when one finds himself grumbling at paying the barber two dollars for trimming the hair remaining around the edges.

Overpowering Shock

To one man of my acquaintance the shock came with almost overpowering force as he was trying to help his high-school daughter with her homework. The daughter was patient, as only children can be with their parents. But finally she closed the books, looked him compassionately in the eye and said, "Daddy, we might as well face it, you have helped me as far as you can."

But although in typically American fashion we may speak lightly and whimsically of middle age, actually the experience is not funny at all. Dante, I think, penned the classic description of its more somber side:

> Midway this way of life we're bound upon,
> I woke to find myself in a dark wood,
> Where the right road was wholly lost and gone,
> . . . . . .
> How I got into it I cannot say,
> Because I was so heavy and full of sleep
> When first I stumbled from the narrow way.

We have heard that story many times, and we have seen it in the bewildered eyes of people who, for whatever reasons, would not or could not tell it for themselves.

Once it was told me by a man who had retired long before necessary from his work as the sales-manager for a candy bar company. He said his children had grown up, graduated from college and were happily married. His work took him away

THE JOURNEY

om home a great deal and his wife was left alone. e had traveled so much that all trains, planes, otel rooms were very much alike to him and all ie meals away from home tasted about the same. verywhere he went he did business with the same eople under different names. Then one night in hotel room the thought struck him that though e didn't really know from experience, there *must* e more to this life than peddling candy bars. And ith that thought his heretofore compelling drive rew limp, his outwardly successful career became ieaningless to him and his life seemed to disinte- rate. He woke, indeed, to find himself "in a dark ood,/Where the right road was wholly lost and one."

Now, one can have the fearful feeling that he as lost "the right road" only if he cherishes some onception of the ideal goal of his life. The ex- hange between Alice in Wonderland and the heshire cat illustrates this nicely: " 'Cheshire-Puss . . would you tell me, please, which way I ought o go from here?' 'That depends a good deal on vhere you want to get to,' said the cat. 'I don't nuch care where,' said Alice. 'Then it doesn't mat- er which way you go,' said the cat." It is obvious hat unless we know "where we want to get to" here can be no judgment about whether the road ve are on is "right" or "wrong."

The Greatest Failure

I think that the greatest failure of religious eadership in this country today comes from an nwillingness or inability to define ideally "where ve want to get to." Too many sermons begin by elling us that we are lost in the woods — which nost of us do not need to be told — and end with more or less sophisticated plea to take the partic- lar road the preacher happens to be traveling. But vhere it really leads to remains a mystery. The entimental define it as "peace of mind." The aive define it with the incantation of a cliché. The more sophisticated sometimes describe it as ulfillment "beyond history," which safely removes from the critical examination of equally sophisti- ated sceptics. No wonder most people concentrate on proximate and tangible goals "in history," and get damned by the self-chosen pious for being "secularists."

Dante, when he realized he was on the wrong road, was in one respect better off than most people today, because his church with all its shortcomings told him where he wanted to get to. Hence he could "see" "the blissful mountain yonder,/The cause and first beginning of all joy." Perhaps this suggests the real business of a church.

In any case, because this was true his pagan mentor and guide, Virgil (representing the best of human wisdom), was able to give him some good advice and lead him in the right direction. He was not asked, as some ask us now, to begin the religious life by abandoning his genius and learning. Virgil began by telling Dante that since the road he was on had led him only into the dark woods where he was lost, therefore, if he wanted to get out he would have to take a different path. This sounds reasonable. My salesmanager came to essentially the same conclusion.

Dante's different path led through hell and purgatory, and ours is likely to also. Our whole religious tradition suggests that however Paradise is conceived, there is no direct and easy road to it. To take this different path is the hard thing to do, even after the recognition that one is on the wrong road. It is hard because although the figure requires that we picture it as a matter of simple choice, it is the most profound choice of all. Robert Frost caught this in his crisp Yankee way:

> I shall be telling this with a sigh
> Somewhere ages and ages hence:
> Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —
> I took the one less traveled by,
> And that has made all the difference.*

It is the choice of what one is to be, that is, the choice of character, and this choice when analyzed has always been recognized as at most only partially under the control of the individual.

Back of the figure of the paths is the idea that an individual life is a series of decisions and choices. These are the universally known script with which

* From the *Complete Poems of Robert Frost.* Copyright, 1930, 1949, by Henry Holt and Company, Inc. By permission of the publisher.

a man writes his true character into the record for all to read. What he thus writes over a period of time is a fairly consistent story. You can usually predict what your friends will choose. What, we ask, determines the consistent nature of these individual choices? It seems to me that there is almost universal agreement that they are determined by what the individual as total person, consciously and unconsciously, really wants — that is, by what he really loves with all his mind, soul, heart and strength. So some have said that these choices are determined by the god one really worships. What one really loves defines what he wills to prevail in human life, what he is really working for, and hence determines all his attitudes toward his fellow humans and his basis for the judgment of them.

Therefore it is desperately important for an individual to know what he really loves and wants to prevail in his own and all human life. But this may be almost impossible for him to find out. The world's a stage with parts to be played, and before we know what is happening to us we are fitted with masks and costumes in keeping with the role that our society calls upon us to take. With the role goes a definition of what one in our position is expected to love and work for. It is most difficult for one to distinguish between his true self as a person, and the part he plays as an actor; between his real features and the mask he wears in society's play. To do so requires reflective thinking about one's own being and acts — this kind of contemplation plus hard honesty.

Clues to One's Self

Perhaps one gains the surest clues to his real being, to what he really loves, by contemplating what activity he finds most enjoyable, what kind of people he finds most congenial, in which groups he feels most relaxed and free, what he would do if he had absolute assurance that no one would ever find out. Think on these things and you will come to know yourself. I suppose that a state wherein the true person exactly coincided with the actor would constitute a fair description of Paradise, or of Hell. The only difference between the two is the kind of people who live there.

The simple figure, then, of taking a different path is the image of the profound experience that comes with changing what one really loves and wills to prevail. This is difficult to a point of impossibility, and as yet we do not know too much about it. The change here is very radical. The common term for it in our religious tradition has been "conversion," and the fact that it has almost always been attributed to the unsearchable initiative of God suggests that this change, often enough observed and experienced by a few, almost baffles explanation. What sentimental revivalism has done to make this most profound experience in human life seem simple and easy constitutes one of the major tragedies of Christianity in America. Dante knew, as most revivalists apparently do not, that the desire to take a different path cannot be fulfilled by accepting a cliché, and I think it downright immoral to lead people to suppose that it can be.

This view of the nature of *the* choice that lies back of all the discreet choices gives point to Dante's conception that the culmination of a life comes at that point where to take a different path is no longer a possibility. Paradise and Hell, then, are states in which the individual's choice of that which determines all his many choices is definitely and permanently fixed. Ralph Waldo Emerson put the conclusion very nicely: "As we are, so we associate. The good, by affinity, seek the good; the vile, by affinity, the vile. Thus of their own volition, souls proceed into heaven, into hell," and, we might add, remain there.

Irreversible Choice

Hell, then, whatever it may be in a future life, is evident enough in this life as the complex consciousness that one is on the wrong road, that he is lost in a dark wood, that he can never arrive at where he wants to get, that somehow the taking of the path he did was a matter of his own choice, and, for whatever reasons, he cannot now choose to take another. It is the crushing realization that a choice has been made that is irreversible, and that it has consequences that are unavoidable. Had my salesmanager been unable to try a different path when it was pointed out to him, he would have dwelt in hell thereafter. And a Dante might have pictured him being brewed forever in a mess of boiling chocolate full of crunchy peanuts, or frozen in the deliciously sweet center of a completed bar. Of course, for us a more terrifying kind of hell would be one in which this man had forever to view and hear nothing but TV commercials for the candy bar he sold. In any case, this conception of hell requires that its denizens are self-conscious and have no longer any illusions about themselves. So the state is made bitter with the realization that they got what they really wanted and worked for — and more bitter because they cannot accept it. So finally it is hell precisely because it is a condition of perpetual rebellion against the perpetually inevitable. As Dante said, hell is the state in which people live without hope but with strong desires.

But if hell be conceived as the state wherein the individual choice of that which determines all his choices is permanently fixed, then, as suggested above, so also must Paradise be conceived. Perhaps this is the basis for the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints or of entire sanctification However that may be, the thought has interesting implications. For once having chosen the right path which leads to the "blissful mountain," all the lesser

(Continued on page 21)

ing Sensitive to the Needs of Others an Expression of Christlikeness

Christ, Crowds and Compassion

By John R. Bodo

HOW do you react to crowds? It is one thing to be part of a crowd, sharing its mood, when attend a ball game or a parade or a political rally here we can enter into the spirit of the crowd — e our identity in the crowd — and enjoy it all eatly. But looking at a crowd as an observer, vorced from its mood, is quite another thing. om this perspective a crowd is not a pretty sight. ople are never attractive en masse. The physical liness and moral confusion of human beings is where more evident or more shocking than in a owd.

How do you react to crowds? Perhaps with riosity. Perhaps with caution. Perhaps with con-mpt. There is good reason for any one of these actions or for all three. But Jesus, who was rever besieged by crowds, reacted differently. he people in the crowds that followed him were st as ugly and fickle, just as frustrated and self-ntered as their 20th century counterparts. But sus did not fear them. He did not despise them. e did not even seem to mind their dogging his otsteps. On the contrary, the evangelists have left a unanimous witness to the compassion of Jesus his compassion for the crowds.

Friends of Jesus

This was a different attitude from that of the reek sage to whose school only sons of the elite ere admitted. It was different from the attitude the Roman poet who wrote, "I hate and shun e vulgar mass." It was different from the attitude the Jewish religious leaders whose disregard for mmon people is dramatically shown in the story the Good Samaritan.

Jesus loved the common people. He welcomed eir presence when they came to him with their problems, their diseases, their perplexities. He attended their modest feasts, like the wedding at Cana. He ate in their homes, which was socially unacceptable and religiously taboo. He never left them for long, except to withdraw for a brief spell to meditate and to pray. He was a son of the people, at ease among the well-born and the powerful but happiest among the inarticulate and the humble.

From the beginning of his ministry the sharpest criticism leveled at Jesus was that he kept company with publicans and sinners, with corrupt petty officials and women who eked out a hard living by easy virtue. This guilt by association, which was as vicious a propaganda device then as it is now, Jesus never denied. On the contrary, he gloried in it. When the character of his friends was pointed out to him for the thousandth time, he finally consented to comment. "Those who are well," he said, "do not need a physician, but those who are sick."

For Jesus chose his friends according to their need of him rather than according to his need of them. He loved the people who obviously needed the things he could give them: healing, forgiveness, courage. He considered his time too valuable for men who were too well-fed to realize that they were starving spiritually or too highly educated to know that the wisdom of man may be folly with God.

There were exceptions, of course. Jesus had no class prejudice. He did not close his heart and mind to anyone. He freely gave himself to Nicodemus, though he knew that Nicodemus was not ready for him. He loved the grace and charm of the rich young man. His heart ached when he saw that the young man's money was shutting him out of God's Kingdom. He also had some other heart-warming encounters with prominent men. Zacchaeus, the small-town tycoon, had long suffered from the contempt of his fellow citizens. He had probably come to despise himself. Then Jesus singled him out, and made him feel like an honest man in spite of his ill-gotten wealth. Zacchaeus responded with a surrender of his money, his station, his heart. A ruler of men, he became a servant of God.

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For the most part, however, Jesus was with the crowd. His disciples were tradesmen, workers, civil servants from the bottom rungs of the ladder. The sick and the morally diseased came to him for healing. The poor came waiting to be fed. And Jesus had compassion on them.

What was this compassion like? For one thing, the compassion of Jesus was not condescending. Woe to us if our compassion for our less fortunate fellow men is tinged with condescension. This is where the Devil has a field day with us, taking hold of some bit of objective good, like a relief offering, and poisoning it with the spirit of condescension. The more pleas we hear on behalf of stricken people and the more we respond to them at a comfortable distance, the more we are tempted to feel that there is something divinely ordained about our prosperity, and that the poor of the world form a sort of practice green on which to perfect the putts of our goodness.

When Jesus said that we would always have the poor with us, he was being realistic. He was not saying it to absolve us from social responsibility or to salve our consciences concerning social injustice. It is a strange and disturbing thing that the word "welfare" should be held in such disrepute merely because of the normal differences of opinion as to *how* the fullest life might be assured for the most people.

No Cheap Compassion

The compassion of Jesus was not condescending. Nor was it sentimental. When Jesus saw that the people were hungry and their provisions gone, he provided bread, but he had no illusions about saving the world by economic means alone. This is one of the major errors and delusions of communism: to assume that if only all the material needs of people were met, we would have paradise on earth. Religion has frequently misled people into thinking that material welfare does not matter. Unconsciously and sometimes perhaps consciously, religion has been used as "an opiate of the people." Nevertheless, in spite of occasional abuse, religion — and especially Christianity — has helped to point up the limitations of material blessings. We see in our own country a telling demonstration of the folly of materialistic sentimentality. We have more food to waste than others have to eat; more clothes to give away than others have to wear; more gadgets to junk than others have to use. But are we the happier for it?

The compassion of Jesus was neither condescending nor sentimental. Nor was it cheap. This is perhaps the most telling criterion of compassion: how much it costs to implement it. It is one thing to give a tiny sliver of our income to help meet human need through the church or any other institution. It is another thing to give the widow's mite, which may be one dollar or ten thousand dollars, since it is measured not in terms of currency but in terms of sacrifice. But even the widow's mite is not the acme of compassion. We can give more than what we can spare, more than what we really need for ourselves, more than anything we merely own. Like Jesus, we can give *ourselves*. That is Christlike compassion!

Do you covet the compassion of Jesus? Do you wish you could be the kind of friend he was, at least in some measure? Would you like your life to reflect something of the purity of his motives and the beauty and tenderness of his relationships? There are certain disciplines by which we can grow in Christlike compassion, even if we can never more than touch the hem of his garment.

Extraordinary Empathy

For one thing, we can practice the discipline of empathy. The dictionary defines empathy rather pompously as "the imaginative projection of one's own consciousness into another being." As a rule, we cause as much evil or miss as much good by thoughtlessness as by design. We are so full of our own problems and ambitions that we do not understand, let alone feel, the desires and needs of others. We do not have what Gillette Burgess in his famous lecture has named "an educated heart." Jesus possessed an extraordinary measure of empathy. When the Samaritan woman approached him for theological information he instantly knew that this was not her real need. She did not really care to know how to worship God properly. She was concerned with the guilt of her own promiscuous life which made it impossible for her to worship God at all. Jesus caught the overtones at once. His empathy enabled him to resolve the discord in the woman's soul into a new harmony with God.

Another discipline is to love the unlovely. Jesus once told a typical crowd that if they loved only their loved ones they were not doing anything remarkable. Even the worst of men are likely to love their mothers, their wives, their children. Such love may be nothing more than an extension of self-love. The real test of love is to love people who repel us, people whom it is natural for us to fear and to hate. Perhaps the most scathing comment on our American Protestant churches is that by and large obvious sinners are not welcome in them. The first thing a man is likely to do when he feels guilty of something is to stop coming to church. The first thing we are likely to do when we know something incriminating about a man is to point at him in church, muttering, "What business has he here?" We have to learn that the church is not a club restricted to sinners whose sins are fashionable and socially acceptable, but that all sinners, shaved or unshaved, couth or uncouth, employed or unemployed, are welcome here. As a matter of fact, Jesus made a comparison between

(Continued on page 22)

'acing Failure with Renewed Purpose
'an Make Living Worth the Struggle

The Beat Generation: What's Their Problem?

By Lawrence L. Gruman

BLACK leotards, unkept beards, dirty sweaters and exotic conversations are the outward signs of a new legion of Bohemians coming into focus in the far west. Their costumes and jargon are only surface signs of their deep revolt against American culture. They call themselves writers but they do not write anything readable; they call themselves a vanguard movement, but they lead nowhere; they call themselves intellectuals, but they do not think wittily or profoundly; they call themselves artists, but they deny any standards; they call themselves Zen Buddhists, but they talk too much; they insist they are happy, but they pad about solemnly without a sense of humor; they say they are "with it" and at the same time reach out frantically after sex, dope, alcohol and jazz in order to get "with it." Who are they? They call themselves the beat generation and they seem pleased to offer comic relief to the trim Ivy League concept of success.

Many people pretend they do not exist and hope they will go away. But they won't because the so-called beatniks are making a valid social protest. They speak and act in violent ways because our callous society will listen to nothing less dramatic. Every move of theirs is a direct contradiction of some feature of our normal society, every word is designed to mock something we hold important or even sacred. But we have asked for it — we have spawned this bedraggled Bohemianism, and now we must hear what it has to say to us.

At the outset, we should be clear that the beat generation is not a literary movement, a religious cult nor an intellectual sect. It is a gathering-in of young people radically disturbed by the hypocrisy of an America dominated by an ethic of success, a national program of militarism and a culture of social conformity. They have the right, if not the duty, to be disturbed by our society. So if their protest lacks coherence, remember that it is a negative move, a complete withdrawal from the purpose of society. Thus we will pay scant attention to the absurd hysterical words they say.

But that they are driven to such nonsense is important to us. Perhaps we can best understand them by asking the standard questions: Who are they? What do they do? What do they believe? What are they protesting so vigorously? Then later we may ask: What is their message to us?

Rebellious Vigor

Members of the gathering-in are young men and women in their twenties and thirties who retain the rebellious vigor of adolescence. They cluster around centers like San Francisco and Venice, California, where they indulge in a round of trancelike activities. These include somber dancing sessions, drinking bouts, interminable conversations and social events where a self-styled "poet" reads his latest work. They eat where they can sponge some food; they sleep anywhere space is available. These people are young primarily in the sense of being restless and irresponsible. Someone has described them as being "scrambled eggheads," but they would not take kindly to such serious implications. Churchill, in his book *The Improper Bohemians,* calls their life one of "artistic gypsydom," and that is as fair a description as we can find.

As for what they do, the answer is: as little work as possible and as much gratifying of the senses as possible. But they are caught up in the classic irony that in rejecting conformity they are bound to a new pattern of conformity from which they cannot escape. So they will don their "beat" togs, carefully avoid combing their hair and set out on a day of sophisticated loafing. The day may include stealing food or a car when it seems advisable. It may admit entanglements with sex, liquor or narcotics. It will certainly include holding languid conversation and some sort of socializing with other members of the cult. Writing poetry and jeering at some "squares" are accepted sports. Enjoying their poverty, they put a premium on hap-

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piness and will include whatever sensation gives them "kicks." Here is a line of "poetry" that has "kick": "O man, thee is onion/constructed in hot gaberdine" (Kaufman). And another by Corso: "Impish death Satyr Bomb Bombdeath/Turtles exploding over Istanbul/the jaguar's flying foot Soon to sink in Arctic snow." Don't bother to react — the "beats" are not looking for approval nor acceptance; they are, as one writer puts it, "looking for room at the bottom."

Incapable of Commitment

Now, if we may give them credit for convictions, what do they believe? If it is true that beliefs have consequences, these people believe nothing. They want desperately to believe in something, but they find themselves unable of commitment to any proposition, any program nor any person — and that includes God and themselves as well. They claim to believe in creativity for its own sake; but there is no such thing, for creativity depends on convictions and requires work. They loudly claim to be against work, against the state, militarism and business (Kenneth Rexroth), but they supply no substitutes for these. They are, on the other hand, *for* jazz, sex and narcotics, or simply for the sharpest physical sensations attainable. No philosophy underlies their actions, and their playful flirtation with Zen Buddhism is a preposterous rationalization.

The picture, then, is one of full-scale rebellion. But what is the protest all about? Jack Kerouac, their literate spokesman, says they protest living "in the ruins of bourgois civilization." Allen Ginsberg, another spokesman, objects to the "narcotic haze of capitalism." Kenneth Rexroth complains of the "values of a commercial civilization." But none dares to be too articulate lest, in his clarity, he imply some positive action be taken. Whatever the defense, the rebellion is on!

A good healthy reaction to all this parasitic living is that the "beat" people are an inconsequential dreg of modern society, paranoic personalities who are simply prolonging their own suicide. "The less attention paid to them, the better for all of us," is the typical "square" reaction. But second thoughts admit that the "beatniks" threaten us deeply, and we dare not dismiss them casually. So, at the expense of encouraging the rebellion by taking it seriously, let us turn to the message they hold out for us.

Here is the way they see our world: First, in modern America the power structures have grown so large and so complex that the individual is far removed from any decisive role. In actuality, organizations (agencies, bureaus, corporations and such) have become the significant factor and the individual is all but submerged. In fact, the individual is always in danger of becoming expendable, and his best defense against annihilation is to achieve whatever success he can. This means that to maintain any sense of personal worth, one must succeed in some meaningful way. Considerations of honesty and justice are irrelevant to the man on the make. The only achievement worth sacrificing for is success. This is the renowned American success ethic, and we are all infected with it.

Of course, we may not ourselves trample on morality, but we are part of a public that identifies righteousness and success. A man tells me: "This book by Dr. So-and-so (a renowned clergyman) must be good; it's a best-seller!" And at the close of 1959 the public opinion polls rated the death of a free-wheeling actor as more important than the death of our former Secretary of State! This easy equation of success and goodness is hardly new; some of the Hebrew Psalms suggest that the wealthy man is obviously enjoying the reward of righteousness. But never has a civilization been so dominated by this moral, or amoral, climate. The baseball manager Leo Durocher put it neatly: "Nice guys finish in the second division." Now, what does one do if he refuses to enlist in the scramble of success-at-any-price? You can't lick 'em and you won't join 'em, so you grovel and grope for the bottom! That is the beatnik's answer. From his position he will not ask anyone, but I will: What moral considerations do you scuttle in pursuit of success?

Obstructed Peace

Secondly, America is a fantastically wealthy nation, eager to enjoy its prosperity in peace. But the larger item in our national budget is spent to build weapons of mass destruction, for we will maintain our national supremacy at any price. Anyone naive enough to advocate that as a Christian nation we follow the simplest Christian teaching of universal love is regarded as dangerous in peacetime and is clapped into prison in wartime, while all the "Christians" are bearing arms in service for their "peace-loving" country. What does one do who really loves peace and is willing to relinquish prestige as well as prosperity in order to achieve peace? Such a one, says the beatnik, rejects all the business and political structures that obstruct the peace he longs for. And with neither an economic nor political framework there's no society worth mentioning, so why not grovel in unwashed despair? They are not in a position to ask, so I will: How do you reconcile peaceful words with a warlike nation?

Our third consideration of American life is the climate of conformity. In our society large blocs of people form static groups within which personal expression is frowned upon. Patterns of dress and conversation are dictated. But further, patterns of opinion and belief are also assigned and only the bravest or most stupid dissents. Any person with an original point of view is looked on with alarm.

very debate is thought to be resolvable; and opposing points of view are sent into a committee where harmony must needs emerge. There seems to be no place for the original thinker or the courageous dissenter, except into the ranks of the beat."

We know a lot about conformity in our time. We read of the professor at Brown University who was hounded and rejected by students on his campus for the sin of advocating that the university abolish football. Other universities have intercollegiate football and so will we, said the students. A minister was severely criticized because he did not support the annual Christmas parade sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce. A group of college girls wearing colored bobby socks instead of the usual white ones suffered all kinds of indignities for their refusal to dress like everyone else.

Criticism that Hurts

Now, when it becomes dangerous to have convictions that differ from those of the crowd, you may join the crowd or simply rebel against the whole thing. The young Californians, their ideas repeatedly beaten by overwhelming odds, choose to be rebels. They won't accost you with the question, but I will: How well do you maintain your integrity against the pressure of the crowd?

The three questions I have posed to you seem to me the central ones addressed by the beat generation. No person, no organization has given answers that satisfy these young people. They see business as corrupted by profit seeking, politics as selling out to moneyed interests, the church as dominated by conventional standards. The fact is, they are so close to the truth that their criticism hurts us. We have tried to "square" ourselves with our contradictory society by living amid the tensions, so, of course, we are regarded as squares. But the "beats" have tired of the struggle and have bugged out!"

They have rejected both our American society and our American dream. Convinced that only one way remains to show that they despise the world of grey flannel suits and public relations and packaged lives, they run crazily for the opposite extreme. And insofar as the dream is a materialistic one, the "beats" creditably toss it away.

Young people in increasing numbers are recognizing the delusions in our culture and are looking hopefully to the "beat" generation for some means of combating these contradictions, only to find out that the howling protesters hold out no hope of any kind for tomorrow. But they do serve notice that unless the elements of our hope become articulated in practice, the movement will gather more and more destructive force.

In short, they put it squarely to us: Granted that we live in a world where contradictory forces are at work, can we live creatively amid these ironies, always seeking to materialize the ideals we proclaim? Giving in to the status quo is no better than surrender to the deep revolt against it. Only a courageous facing up to our failures and a dedicated pursuit of our highest purpose will suffice to make our lives worth the struggle. Only such an avid pursuit will give young people of the beat generation new cause to engage again in the struggle for a higher destiny.

You thought I could not preach without mentioning Christ. You're right. I can't! I think of our civilization as conceived in Christian terms but now become quite secular. The churches have not retained their essential role as critics and informants; they have too easily become agencies merchandising success and peace of mind. Cut off at the base from its ultimate concerns, secular society withers and becomes distorted. It has denied its religious roots. Once Christ came to show the world the necessity of being in touch with the living God. Only as we keep alive this touch will *love* and *justice* become something other than smooth words and direct us as the passionate final imperatives of our lives. I believe Christ shows the way.

Prayer

ETERNAL God, our Father, amidst the clang of confusion in this day, life sometimes seems too much for us. Often we slip from tested highways into the swamp of disillusionment and despair. Our cherished dreams for peace and goodness which have lured us into high adventure are only partly realized. The noble heights of vision for personal achievement and a better world have been unscaled and, at times, even our sight grows dim.

When such moods are upon us, dear Father, we turn with greater thankfulness to this sanctuary where the sense of thy unfailing presence is made fresh and vivid. We are grateful for the renewal of our sinking spirits and we rejoice that here assurance is again made strong in the joy of mercy and forgiveness. We thank thee for trustworthy guidance as we set our feet once more upon the sure way and for corrected vision as we discern life in proper and wholesome perspective.

Thy love is complete and abiding and we pray that thou wilt help us to use the strength and resources given to us here to understand others and to minister to their need. Amen. — *Charles B. Tupper, Drake University Divinity School, Des Moines, Iowa.*

The Heresy of Joy

By Edward W. Warner

The joy of the Lord is your strength.
Nehemiah 8:10.

But we had to celebrate and show our joy.
Luke 15:32.

THERE is a heresy in the land. Let the orthodox beware and tremble, for in the castle of despair someone is singing in the dungeon. Whose voice is that? And what is the song? And whatever are we going to do about it?

We the orthodox have to be careful. For our orthodoxy is a good orthodoxy. It has been inevitable, thrust upon us, permeated with the sting of reality. We have not come to the recognition of brokenness by any other way than that of hard living. We have affirmed the categories of the demonic and of sin not because we wanted to but because we had to. We proclaim estrangement; we search the tragic vision; we pronounce pathos because they have told us, and tell us, who we are and what life is. We go on the way we do about despair just because despair is appropriate. The bomb we threw while playing in the dark has not yet reached the ground — but it really may. Berlin was the focus of trouble; and, if we ever do really get past that, there will be something else to get past after that. We are sorry, but we just cannot forget the wars and the shaking of the foundations and the rattling of the windows — we do not dare. We have to be careful.

And yet, there goes that music again, someone "singing in his chains like the sea." Who can it be? What? It is one of us, the orthodox? How is that possible? It sounds positively joyful!

How come this joy "kick" anyway? Strangely enough, it appears on the scene as something thrust upon us, permeated with inevitable reality. I speak of it now unavoidably because my friends in orthodoxy (who are experts in matters of despair), my own troubled existence, this Christianity business that I cannot seem to unload, and the persistently stark modern literature all present me with a similar phenomenon. The phenomenon is illustrated by this incident. A dear, crazy, mixed-up friend in one of his wilder moments in the process of psychoanalysis was in a great storm of anguish; his face was contorted, his body tense and he was going on at great length in very angry tones, only to be startled by the analyst's response: "You're faking; all this time you have had your glasses in your hand, holding them very gently, calmly, securely."

Now, I am not intending at all to say that our hard-won orthodoxy is fraudulent. But look, there is that heretical hand! Listen, there is that off-beat music. It is positively joyful! And it can be heard in the stark modern literature, and in my friends who are experts in despair, and in my own troubled self, and in this Christianity business I cannot seem to unload. In fact, it is one of the reasons why I cannot unload any of these items — or resist them more successfully — or would not if I could. What is this heresy at loose in the land? Having already made a gesture of appropriate apology for using this term, I am unabashedly going to call it "joy." In theological terms it is "the joy of the Lord." And the proposition before us is: It is not only in the judgment of God or the mercy of God or the being of God that we are to find what we are and need but that, when all is said and done, it is "the joy of the Lord that is our strength."

Celebration

What is joy? Here are what seem to me to be some of the elements or ways of speaking of joy. The first is *celebration*. "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to him for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

To celebrate is to frequent, to keep an appointment of meaning, to proclaim, to sound the praises of a person, an event, an idea. One way to ask for the meaning of a person is to ask, "What is he

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lebrating?" The television program "Captain angaroo" is justly famous for many reasons, one which is that stirring cartoon, "Tom Terrific." his stunning piece comes on with the knockout pening line: "Terrific! The real great adventures me!" Once we begin to shake off the un-Christian "Christian inhibition" that somehow nothing xciting is ever supposed to happen to us, we can e that everyone does have his story, his "real reat adventures of me." There are, after all, some eople who know how to celebrate their adventures, while others just rub against themselves, her people and life. The celebrators one can ardly help loving; they have the wisdom and the ourage to let gestures, occasions, persons — for all se that they are — be something in themselves.

The play *Harvey* by Mary Chase is the story the gentle, eccentric, alcoholic Elwood P. Dowd, ho has as his friend and companion an enormous hite rabbit. Unseen for the most part by anyone xcept Uncle Elwood, Harvey has wondrous consolng powers which finally conquer everybody's restance. Dr. Chumley, the psychiatrist who is out o cure Elwood and rid the family of the disconerting presence of Harvey, has a spectacular conersation: "Fly-specks. I've been spending my life mong fly-specks while miracles have been leaning n lampposts on 18th and Fairfax." And then in magnificent aside he blurts out in a frenzy: "To ell with decency! I've got to have that rabbit!"*

What is it with that rabbit? I had known for ome time that I was hopelessly charmed by Harey, but I was never certain as to just why until one ay the "breakthrough" occurred. (This incident s certainly eccentric but, I insist, nonalcoholic!) was standing at the Illinois Central Railroad tation at Fifty-third Street, waiting for a train lowntown. It was between five and six o'clock in he evening so that most of the traffic was southound out of the city. I looked up to see two trains n parallel tracks racing side by side toward the latform. Being a frequent traveler on the I.C., I esponded to this sight as an unusual coincidence. As the trains approached, I, of course, expected one f them to stop for passengers and the other to go weeping by. But I was startled, amazed and utterly delighted to see them *both* go blazing past, neck nd neck, at full speed, all the way down the tracks nd out of sight. It was breathtaking! My immeiate response was to exclaim, "Holy Toledo! Look t that!" But then I was confronted with a probem: To whom was I going to make such a comnent? I knew no one else on the platform; one nan sort of looked like he was going to let loose vith appropriate response — and did not. And hen I understood Harvey. Harvey is there to help eep that impulse to celebrate alive. All you do is turn, look up at that glorious character and let go with full enthusiasm: "By golly! Did you see that?" And, of course, he did. Harvey does not miss a thing worth celebrating! He helps keep alive a heretical joy that lets gestures, occasions, persons — for all else that they are — be something in themselves.

Irrepressibility

A second way of speaking of joy is *irrepressibility,* the uninhibitable response to something that has happened. Children at play still produce wisdom to make adults sit up and take notice. During baby-sitting duty one day, the wild young things I was somehow supposed to manage were reaching new heights of chaos, all over a new toy. I attempted to cut into this holocaust with a highly distraught, "Cut it out!" only to be dropped in my tracks by this reply: "We can't stop now. We just found the way to play with it!" That bit of "live grace" belongs in the category of "the never to be forgotten," not only because of what they said, but also *that* they said it *then.*

The guarded anonymity of city living is sometimes broken by refreshing exceptions to the rule. A young man and a young woman were walking toward each other with all the determined disinterest that characterizes Chicago sidewalk traffic. Suddenly, just as they were about to pass, they threw their arms around each other in sweeping embrace, talked excitedly — for no more than a minute — and then went on their separate ways as casually as they had come together. While "hugging clubs" are undoubtedly not the complete answer to life's complex difficulties, let us not miss the point: Whoever those two were, they had the power to celebrate each other on the spot, to be swept into mutual affirmation without embarrassment; they plainly "enjoyed" each other in a moment without fear or hesitation.

J. B. Phillips' translation of the Prodigal Son story gives the full impact of the father's "justification by joy" as his exuberance overflows at the test of his older son's bitterness: "My son, you have been with me all the time and everything I have is yours. But we *had* to celebrate and show our joy. For this is your brother; I thought he was dead — and he's alive. I thought he was lost — and he's found!" Can't you see? Heretical as it may be, we *had* to celebrate and show our joy!

Conquering Power

The third element in joy is its *conquering* power. The strange miracle of the persistently stark modern literature is that through its thorough explication of trouble and ruin shines a relentless strength. This strength is not only the exhilaration that fierce honesty is, but also the affirmative power for which fierce honesty prepares a relevant way. William Faulkner, in receiving the

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Nobel Prize, declared: "I believe that man will not merely endure — he will prevail." Albert Camus added unto his own message: "In the midst of winter I finally discovered in myself an invincible summer." This kind of "being positively joyful" one might have to call "living without hope" in order to express at all — but let us not miss that singing in the dungeon. It is a heresy that belongs.

Handel's oratorio *Israel in Egypt* celebrates first the mighty acts of God in the Exodus and then the mighty attributes of God. Whatever reluctance in yielding to this story is engendered in us by questions historical and philosophical, the sheer magnitude of affirmation in this music is overwhelming. In the final chorus a solo voice fires the phrase: "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously." And the chorus explodes in response: "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." The solo voice: "The horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea." The chorus: "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." One simply cannot avoid the message: The Lord triumphed *gloriously*. This was no split decision — he knocked him into the sea!

Such singing tells that, as sin, brokenness and estrangement are always present, always lurking, sometimes they get conquered. The locating and cataloguing of disease in psychotherapy is impossible without the idea and power of health. We may not always be able to tell exactly what happens, but, even if we just keep going until whatever the trouble is gets conquered by whatever it is that conquers this sort of thing, still victory of some sort is the issue. The concept of suffering love persists not only by its relevance to brokenness but also by its conquering power in and through brokenness.

Fulfillment

The fourth element in joy is *fulfillment*. Paul Tillich has said that "joy is the expression of our essential and central fulfillment." So we ask, "Is fulfillment really possible?" And over and over again we answer: "No, no, no — but, yes!" If we use the concept that "man is made in the image of God," how shall we understand this image apart from understanding God as creative and as rejoicing in his creation? Does not, then, the creature made in the *image* of God enjoy a capacity for rejoicing in response to the joy of the Lord?

Leonard Bernstein captured the imagination of many persons with his television series on the various forms and powers of music. One of the broadcasts concluded with an explication of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*. How really incredible it was to hear a man in the mid-20th century talk excitedly about "all kinds of joy." Then came the performance of the last movement of the symphony. And there they were — all those people, all those sweating human animals, stretching and struggling in enormous effort to bring forth ecstacy — not overexcitement, but ecstacy! Here was great nakedness, and absolute fragileness — and great power, the force of fulfillment. As the massive climax banged out to the end, the insistent question "Why?" received its answer. In the joy of men at the joy of life, "the joy of the Lord" there shimmers and shines through. And it is strong — as only the ultimate can be strong.

The joy of the Lord is our strength. When we know its fulfilling, conquering, irrepressible celebration, we can — even in great brokenness — say "Yes" to life, to others, to ourselves, because there is nothing else to say and nothing else we want to say. We can even say "Yes" to God with the good idea, "Yes" to the Christ with the joy to be completed in men, "Yes" to the Spirit that will not let us forget.

So let us go our way to eat and drink and send a portion to him for whom nothing is prepared; let us make a great rejoicing, because we have understood the words that were declared to us — the joy of the Lord is your strength. And when the orthodox ask us what we are doing — when we the orthodox ask ourselves what we are doing — let us answer faithfully: "There's a heresy at loose in the land, and we're celebrating. What we thought was dead is alive. What we thought was lost is found. Can't you see? We *have* to celebrate and show our joy!"

Lenten Prayer

WHAT a transforming power Jesus had, O God! He took the unpromising commonplace and gave it a rare and noble meaning. A time of temptation for him became an occasion of victory. Of fishermen he fashioned leaders to carry on his work. Harlots he changed into the pure of heart and tax-gatherers into generous benefactors. Quarreling, timorous disciples he galvanized into heroic, intrepid men of God. His cross became his throne and his tomb, the promise of life eternal.

We thank thee, Father, that Jesus came "to proclaim release to the captives." Prisoners are we all, confined within walls of pride and selfishness, of custom and conformity. Often fear and worry are the iron bars that curb our liberty. We are kept in the chain gang by the opinions and practices of other people from whom we dare not differ. Why do we accept this captivity when freedom may be ours for the taking? Surely prayer is a key which will unlock for the modern Christian the castle of Giant Despair. Strike off the shackles that restrain us, O God, and grant us the freedom of sons of thine. Amen. — *Harold Leonard Bowman, pastor emeritus, First Presbyterian Church, Chicago, Illinois.*

What Kind of Faith?

By J. Stanley Barlow

ALL you need, my dear, is faith," someone said to a bereaved mother. "Try faith," the spiritual counselor told a worried businessman. "I n't see how anyone can go on living without th," commented a woman who has had her full are of troubles. This is also the message of the kebox hymn "I Believe." The man speculating the stock exchange is a man of faith. Hitler d faith in the Aryan myth, in the imminence of thousand years of world domination. It takes th to walk downtown or even to sit at ease in r homes and watch TV or read the newspaper. Many front runners in the popular-religions ce recommend their brand of faith because it ings success, peace of mind, sensual satisfaction, at least more confident dreams of a kind of iental paradise or a Beverly Hills heaven hereter. There are thrones there, and crowns, and eans of getting around that are only hinted at the sportscars, skis, jet planes and sputniks of ur own world.

Crucial Question

Is the basic question to us in our situation, "Do u have faith?" Isn't this something like being ld, "You'll have to keep on breathing if you are live"? Is there anyone alive who is devoid of ith? No. The important question is not whether e have faith. Everyone has it with or without eams. The crucial question is, "What kind of ith?"

What kind of faith do we meet in the Genesis ry of the eviction from Eden? What is this agic tale trying to say? It is not a "maybe" or monitory parable. It is a poetic description of e actual state of affairs as the author sees it. "We e evicted," it says. "We are out to begin with." subtle, simple genius it describes life as it is now for the reader even as he imagines — as though in reminiscence — a primal state of innocence and harmony in a beautiful garden.

Is the author nostalgic for the fetal stupor he enjoyed in his mother's womb? Or is he expressing the yearning of a racial unconsciousness that harks back to before the dawn of consciousness? We do not know. But we do tally with him. We can easily put ourselves in the role of the principals in this story: the man Adam, the Hebrew word for mankind; the woman Eve; and yes, the serpent also.

Why does our life bring trouble, mental suffering and, finally, death? The Genesis story answers, "It is because we became conscious!" We took the risk of knowing, of being painfully aware of our solitude, of our dependence upon circumstances and of our certain death. Is this pessimistic or simply realistic?

The story goes on to say that there is some good even on this side of Eden. God made them clothes of skins and continued to converse with the man and the woman. By the sweat of his brow the man earns bread. In pain the woman brings forth her children. But life goes on and continues through propagation. There is even the hint of progress, but never can they eat of the tree of life and thus be as God.

Bliss of Ignorance

There is thinly-veiled resentment toward God as he is depicted in this story. He is like an oriental despot who said, "All is good and harmonious as long as mankind knows neither good nor evil." But man ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In punishment he was removed forever from the paradise of not knowing, from the bliss of ignorance, the stupor of unconscious beings.

The writer tells us the consequence was death. Is it not more likely that when we became conscious beings, death for the first time became a problem to us? Certainly such a reading of the story of the fall suggests a rather ungentle realism in our attitude toward the nature of man.

The Hebrew tradition with this story emerged

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as a new optimism in Paul's theology: "As in Adam, all die. Even so in Christ shall all be made alive." He saw the event of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah of Israel — the event of the dying and resurrected Christ — as a spiritual return to the garden of Eden. "In Christ" we can eat of the tree of life. We see this symbolized in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. But Paul pictures us as taking our powers of memory and anticipation, our knowledge of good and evil with us into the new realm of existence. Our knowledge then will be perfect. We shall understand fully, he says, as we are fully understood.

Before the Christian appropriation of this Genesis story, what kind of faith do we find in it? It is a realistic view of human nature and human destiny. Certainly it is low-pressure faith if, indeed, it is faith at all, but it is realistic, aware of the facts of suffering and death, of the limitations of the human being.

Return to Eden

What kind of faith do we meet in the New Testament story, the parable of the sheep and goats? It speaks of "the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world." The sheep are invited to enter, the goats are barred. The story is true to the genius of the Christian faith. It requires a certain qualification for what we may call the spiritual return to the garden of Eden. Interestingly enough, it suggests little if anything about our giving up our knowledge of good and evil and nothing about our closing our minds to the truth. We discern a much more civilized Eden.

What is the difference between the sheep and the goats? Both are surprised! "When saw we thee?" ask those on the right hand as they look in awe at the person on the throne who now has majestic status and glory. They have never seen anyone so important. Yet he says, "I was hungry, thirsty, cold, ill, imprisoned and you ministered to me; you accepted me and helped me."

"When saw we thee?"

"Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least like me of these my brethren, ye did it unto me. Come ye blessed of my father. Enter into the Kingdom prepared for you. You are made for each other, this Eden and you. You have already accepted as your way of life the way of the Kingdom of God." Were these folks consciously Christians? There is a third group in the story called the "brethren" of the son of man. Certainly the sheep are not necessarily those who are consciously Christians. They are simply those who accept their neighbor in his need. This is the same as accepting Christ, says the parable. If they have lost "in any sense" the knowledge of good and evil, it is that calculating kind of foresight which sees other persons only as objects, means or obstacles to selfish ends.

The goats are surprised also. "When saw we anyone like you, so important-looking, and failed to pay our respects? Why, we always took care of folks who counted, our own kind of folks." Yes, here was their weakness. They had an eye only for their own good. Whether they gave to others and accepted others always depended on whether they were attracted with a view to strengthening their own security, to raising their own status in life.

Unlike the Genesis story, the parable of the last judgment focuses positively, even buoyantly, on the meaning of our mortal existence. Though it is couched in the eschatological language of the times, the story deals emphatically with the present state of affairs, and it settles for mortal existence as a span worthy of our most responsible attention. In other words, the important question is not whether we live or die; we all die. There is no need to cry over this. Let us accept the risks of conscious, social living in which we suffer separation, illness and death.

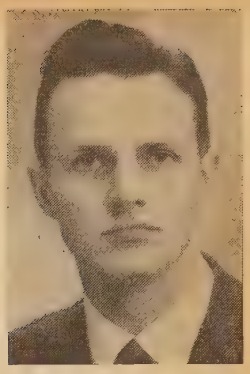
The question is rather how we live. If we live as though we are all that matters, we are really not living at all. We are under the anesthetic — drugged, dreaming — although we do much harm while walking in our sleep. Our time on earth is wasted. But on the other hand, if we live as though life has value in itself and must be cherished, fostered and helped by our efforts, then we are throwing in our lot on the side of life instead of death and destruction. We are what Albert Schweitzer calls "world and life affirming."

The Limit of Hope

The parable teaches this truth: We are what we accept in this life. If we truly receive the spirit of Christ as it comes to us, we show the love he had for others. Only then are we alive in the Christian sense. Many religions speak of God, but when Christianity speaks of God it means that only as we live and act in the spirit of Christ are we *with* God. This is the limit of our hope; it is our responsible faith and our response to the love that is in life.

The question, then, is not do we have faith, but what do we do with our faith? How do we use it? What is our game? None of us can shed all of his illusions. We all must use the vocabulary of faith which we inherit. Religious symbols, notably the symbols of the Christian faith, are our vocabulary as we try to express and understand the meaning of life. When we speak religiously, we are in the realm of poetry. We are using the language of devotion. We call the goodness that is in life the grace of God, the love and mercy of God. We live in it, we die in it, we trust in it and serve it. We base our hope on the fact that there is such a holy presence in our lives. Our loyalty to it and our dependence on it make up our faith — faith that can be both *realistic* and *responsible!*

Without God One Can Do Nothing;
With God All Things Are Possible



Something New Under the Sun

By G. Lynn Myers

IN 1928 George and Ira Gershwin wrote a song entitled "But Not for Me." It has a line which exclaims, "I've seen more clouds of grey than any Russian play could guarantee." The "clouds of grey" approach is the play-by-play account of the world today. Contrary to the opinions of many in the pulpit and those writing for the mass media, all is not Norman Vincent Peale. The voice of the cynic and the professional pessimist is heard once again in the land. In fact, in every field of communication the boys with the big black paint brushes are enjoying their finest hour. They are being read far more than we realize. At the risk of being labled visionary, I wish to present what I feel is the case for that missing ingredient, that all too hidden persuader called "Christian optimism."

Consider the press. Here there are many virtuosos on the organ of doom. On the editorial page of hundreds of newspapers Joseph Alsop prides himself on being the high priest of pessimism. Marquis Childs usually sees only the dark, the somber, the bleak; and so it goes with David Lawrence, George Sokolsky and others. "Abyss" is not a word used exclusively by theologians; the free world for the last ten years has been staring into that "grim abyss," waiting any moment to plunge into total oblivion.

The president of the National Advertising Council in a recent issue of *Look* Magazine spoke of a twenty-million-dollar donated services campaign to fight the "gloom and doom" clan who by their utterances were inadvertently aiding the recession. Even the gloomiest will admit that the back of the recession was broken late in August. As *Look* summed it up, one of the big factors was that the American public refused to panic in spite of all the "crepe hangers" who, true to form, had little if anything to offer in the way of a solution.

Consider the pessimistic tone of the theater, that barometer of society's preoccupations. Arthur Miller's pathetic central figure in "Death of a Salesman" is no isolated straw man. He is representative of millions who find that in today's era of the personality man it is youth that must be served. Hang the thirty years faithful service! Mrs. Willy Loman's pitiful fumblings as she tries to cheer up her husband reveal what all too many wives must be going through. Arthur Miller did not win a Pulitzer Prize for his style alone. It is the American situation, to which we are preaching, that he lays open to the bone. This is enough to make any minister stop and think twice lest he feel the people are too complacent and need to be "shaken up more often."

The magazines shriek, "The Job the Protestants Shirk," "The Decline of Greatness," "The New God for the Space Age" (because the old concept is passé). The people are bound to reflect this attitude unless they are living in a cave. Typical of such views is: If the average person (one without money in this case) wants to go into politics to "do something about it," he can't be his own man. He has to take orders and money from one pressure group or the other, whether it be the AFL-CIO, the Farm lobby or the National Association of Manufacturers. Therefore, he can't call them as he sees them. From this results an indifference, a "what's the use?" attitude on participation in political affairs of any nature. All this by Christians who could help to clean up the word "politics," and cause it to stand for something besides "nepotism, ticket fixing and influence peddling," which is what it has come to mean to millions. And yet, from 11:30 to 12:00 on a Sunday morning society is continually being damned for being so corrupt.

We as Protestants have our own troubles. We hear that the Protestant Church is dying in the city and desperately ill in the country. One wonders how many suburban churches are needed to employ all the ministers. All in all, there seems to be a bitter taste in the mouths of millions. What do we do about it? One ready-made approach is to "jolt them out of their despair." We somewhere

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get the idea that church members are bedded down for the century and to wake them and keep them in the mainstream of the Christian message, you've got to "shake them up."

In two years of listening to Monday morning quarterbacking about last Sunday's sermon, these self-satisfied bleats still ring in my ear: "I really let them have it yesterday." "Really gave them the word." "You've got to take their old narrow beliefs and blast them." This is known as the "Holy Terror" approach to the flock. What disturbs me about it is that too often ministers tend to make their parishioners verbal punching bags as an outlet for their own frustrations, when, in many cases, these people have already experienced a week which was more disillusioning than the pastor experienced. Men who stare at a lathe all week or wear the uniform of a junior executive are often trapped in a job that lacks any real flavor or creativity, and need to know that they do matter, that they are more than blurs in the "lonely crowd."

A contemporary historian, writing in a recent issue of *Esquire* magazine, views Americans from another viewpoint. He writes: "The typical would seem to be those who lead lives not of 'quiet desperation,' but of wilfully frenetic gaiety. They play harder, they plunge themselves into ritualized social rounds of pleasure, they drink, they joke, they do anything and everything to keep from thinking about the dream that is fading away and may never be recaptured."

Hollow Dreams

To be sure, they may have the wrong dreams. Our adult values are not much more than the teen-age juke box plea for a "house and a car and a wedding ring." But the dreams after realization are flat and hollow. And when it is too late for another desperation play, then many do realize that their ways, their goals and their lives were completely out of tune with the Christian ideals of commitment and self-denial. It gets through to us that we were never really able to take our hands off our lives and see if perhaps God could use them totally. Then the persecution of self sets in, a real sickness unto death. This guilt can lash out, cobralike, in many ways of defense. A silent resigned "given up" approach to life or the cynical "down on the world" path where the individual involved must be given the "kid glove" treatment or else. These types are all around us, they are in our churches and outside them. We, as pastors, must try to help them. If we do nothing more than reflect this ourselves and hit at the evils of materialism and secularism then what have we done to allay the situation? Sick society can use a theological pat on the back as well as the constant body blow to the ego.

We see man summed up, classified and permanently filed away and we glibly repeat the phrases that "man is estranged, depraved, completely and totally divorced from God, a mass of conformity, utterly selfish, enslaved to materialism, shallow, aimless and indifferent." No intelligent person would deny or dilute this basic fact. Granted, man must understand exactly who he is and what he is, before he can understand the height, depth and breadth of the gift of God incarnate. Without this realization, we have an easy faith that asks no questions and provides no answers. But I do believe the time has come to speak much more about man being a "little less than the angels and created in the image of God." For in an era where bad news and the bored, beat, bitter approach to life is the order of the day for millions, the Good News of God was never more desperately needed from the pulpit.

Snare of Sentimentality

What are some of the ways this Good News can still avoid the snare of sentimentality? Look at Paul's approach. The book of Romans is anything but wishy-washy about man's state. Yet, through it runs the message of a strong, vibrant hope that though the situation may be lamentable there is something to be said on the other side — that God has done something about it. Paul said it too, in the letter to the church at Corinth: "If a man is in Christ he has become a new person altogether, the past is all finished and gone, everything has become fresh and new." The people need to hear this faith in the worth of the individual, what he can become and the new state of things Christ offers.

Paul Tillich likens this new state of affairs to the resurrection from the dead. He urges us to accept it, enter into it, let it grasp us. When it has, then we can no longer rightfully get bogged down in the mire of the old, the tired, the cynical approach to the world, but we will instead offer the fresh and new.

The old, old story with fresh new concern can be applied by us from our pulpits. We must be informed on "right to work," escalator clauses, fringe benefits, minimum wage laws — their enforcement in our community; the influence of foreign markets and cheap labor upon our economy; the need for participation in civic affairs. This new concern will help to remove our "ivory tower" stigma by showing our people that we as pastors are aware of their material as well as spiritual problems.

To be sure, our main task is to offer the hope of the risen Christ to the world. Arthur Gossip, a preacher of great insight, places an indictment on us all as he writes, "The mass of suffering in a congregation hidden away behind the quiet faces in the pews, is almost unbelievable. But the average preacher seems not to be very sensitive to, or to get dulled and deadened to it as the years go on; he can talk to people at their wits' ends with their whole souls crying, 'Why, why, why?' in a glib,

complacent, nonunderstanding way that does not help, but rather maddens."

Christ's approach can well be noted. The people were taking a beating from the religious leaders of their day, the scribes and Pharisees. They seemed more eager to convict than to convert. They threw around the words "sinner" and "adulterer" with disarming ease. These were the ones who loaded the burdens but did little to lift them. The burden of sin on Americans today is a heavy one, and it may well be "woe unto us" if we fail to lessen the very burden that we have placed through the process of conviction. Christ called the religious leaders of his day evil, adulterous and ravenous wolves because of their attitude toward their congregations.

To be sure, the congregation heard the words "faithless" and "perverse" applied to them. But wait, the whole story was not told. The people, no doubt, felt as many do today after the minister has depicted man's state: "Yes, this is we alright, but is there any word from the Lord?" Christ did not leave them hanging on the ropes, reeling, with no hope. There was a word from the Lord then and an even greater one today in the message of the empty cross and tomb. For unless we play the other side of the record, we have merely offered a new legalism and pessimism and not the gospel which is Good News.

Surely if Christ were here today the words "faithless" and "perverse" would be applied to our generation — and also something more, "something new under the sun." He saw in the disciples — men who were not heroes with halos, but like us, selfish and blundering — something positive. He saw in that group of ordinaries that, in spite of themselves, they were the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world." Surely this approach bore fruit. One needs only to look in the various fields of endeavor — music, theater, sports, politics, journalism — where an unforeseen nobody, a cipher, scaled unheard-of heights because someone at a critical moment believed in him. How infinitely greater this applies in the realm of the eternal! While it is true that "without Me you can do nothing," the time has come to realize as well that with God all things *are* possible.

Upon the Journey

(Continued from page 8)

choices must be in keeping with it. That's logical. One's waking in the "dark wood" may be to the realization that he is already on the "right path" and it is too late for him to go to hell — even if he wanted to! Hence we might say with Paul, and mean it quite literally, that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

In recent years it has become the fashion for many preachers to be fascinated by the evil in mankind, although they themselves are usually kindly and good men. They say they have discovered that in all man's works there is a mixture of sin. This obvious "fact of life" has never seemed to me a very striking discovery. Having "discovered" sin, these leaders seem to relish moping over Paul's comment: "for the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." But this, in the context we have suggested, is the exclamation of one in hell — that is, of one who realizes he is on the wrong road and cannot choose another. Therefore I sometimes suspect such preachers, if they stop there, of being blind leaders of the blind, headed for a fall into the pit. It seems to me impossible to have a real conception of hell without a corresponding conception of Paradise to match it. For without Paradise, no one could know he was in hell. Above I noted my opinion that the failure to define Paradise is perhaps the greatest failure of religious leadership today.

Reluctant Sainthood

Those on the right path might surely at times exclaim: "The evil that I would I do not; but the good which I would not, that I do." At least I have known some people I thought could honestly say that. And even I have at least a few times in my life felt inhibitions that kept me from being as evil as I thought I wanted to be. Therefore it seems to me reasonable to suppose that good can become as habitual as evil. In the vernacular, some people just cannot be real stinkers even if they try. Let us give them their due, just as we are so careful always to give the devil his. Perhaps they *are* on the path to Paradise.

Jonah is a classic example of the man who finds himself shut up to doing the good he was called (and has really chosen) to do. Once on the right path, he certainly squirmed, and did everything he could to get off from it, but to no avail. Having chosen to love God — having chosen "life and good," in spite of all his grumbling and anger, and in spite of all his willful attempts to choose "death and evil," he ended up going to Nineveh "according to the word of the Lord" that was in him.

Then there is Peter, the saint of saints, the primordial rock of the church. The Gospel of John contains the enigmatical story which concludes with the Master saying to Peter: "When you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go . . . Follow me." The striking thing is that this was said to Peter, not on the verge of hell, but on the

verge of sainthood. I conclude that Peter may have been as reluctant a saint as was Jonah a reluctant prophet.

His appearances in the book of Acts before his life fades into legend and limbo, would seem to bear this out. Insofar as he was an emissary to the gentiles, he seems to have been a reluctant one. In fact, it took a vision from God himself to convince him that he "should not call any man common or unclean" but even this conviction apparently did not last. The suggestion is that this founder of the church was practically forced into accepting the principle that has been one of the church's greatest glories. Having taken the "right path" by choosing to follow Christ, it is possible that others girded him and carried him where he did not consciously wish to go — along the rough road into sainthood.

Now what is the conclusion of this discourse? The only way I can suggest one is by resorting to the figurative language of our religious tradition. I trust that this is not just launching a wish on the wings of a cliché.

If and when one wakes up in the "dark wood" and feels that he is on the wrong road, this distressing fact itself is evidence that he has an inkling of where he wants to go. Our whole religious tradition tells us that the right road thereto is pointed out in the first and great commandment: Love God, and love your fellow man — and if you can't do both, begin by loving your fellow man. This suggests that one gets on the right road, not by looking abroad for someone to come and point it out, but by looking into his own soul. It is all summed up beautifully in Deuteronomy 30:

> For this commandment which I command you this day is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?" Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it," But the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, *so that you can do it.*

Christ, Crowds

(Continued from page 10)

a Pharisee and a publican to show that God prefers a sincere, penitent outcast to an attractive, respectable hypocrite.

The last discipline — and the most obvious one — is to invest our life in the service of others; to take the item marked "good works" from the bottom of our priority list and put it at the top. There is something artificial about the idea of a daily good turn, dutifully remembered and faithfully recorded. It does not appeal to our healthy Protestant distrust of good works. Nevertheless, if we purposefully do one thing each day that will help someone else without giving us any credit, publicity or even undue ego satisfaction, we are at least doing *something* to implement our professed discipleship rather than just thinking about it.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them. He could have left it at that. No one forced him to embrace their cause, to make their concerns his concern, to expose himself to their diseases, to share their poverty, to live their burdened life. Jesus could have lived and let live, just as we are so frequently urged to do. We are warned not to do too much for other nations. But Jesus did not confine himself to his own nation. We are advised not to borrow the troubles of minorities. But Jesus made himself a one-man minority and died, unchampioned, on a cross. We are reminded that charity begins at home, that is, with ourselves. But Jesus went to that cross, knowingly and deliberately, for Peter, for Judas and for us. For Jesus would have had no use for the "live and let live" formula. In him the ancient proverb, "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother" put on flesh. He gave his all, even his life, that we might live and help others live.

> "Live and let live!" was the call of Old,
> The call of the world when the world was cold,
> The call of men when they pulled apart,
> The call of the race with a chill on the heart.
>
> But "Live and help live!" is the cry of the New,
> The cry of the world with the Dream shining through,
> The cry of the Brother World rising to birth,
> The cry of the Christ for a brotherly earth.*

* Edwin Markham, "Live and Help Live" (New York: Doubleday & Co.).

Prayer

O God, our God, after the mountaintop spiritual experience, teach us the value of the valley. Lord Jesus, it is so human to want to linger with thee and Moses and Elijah. It seems so valuable to prolong the ecstasy of the high moment. Yet may we learn that the joy of thy fellowship and the sense of communion with seers, prophets and the redeemed over the aeons must not be an end in itself.

Teach us that true greatness lies in meeting the needs of distraught and anxious men in our own valley, in serving where we are. Give us the power of prevailing prayer that is adequate to the need we see in the lowland as well as giving support to us to keep fresh in our hearts the wonder of the mountaintop. For we too have had our own mystical experiences no less than Peter, James and John when we have seen the radiance of thy Son Jesus in the whiteness of his glory. Amen. — *Hillyer H. Straton, First Baptist Church, Malden, Mass.*

You Can Lead In Your Profession . . .

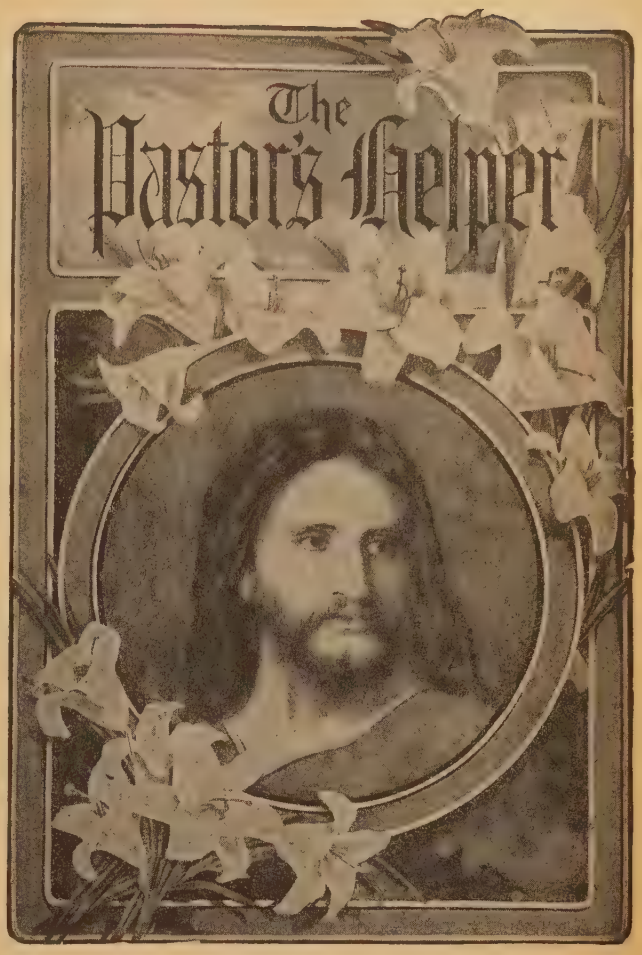
PROBABLY you have known pastors who have taken unpromising parishes and in a short time have revitalized the seemingly careless and indolent congregation. They pay off the old debts, beautify the church with new windows — new pews — or new lighting; perhaps start a building campaign for a new church or parsonage.

Inquiry will probably show the wonder-working pastor has a good helper in the form of a Parish Paper, which has worked to unite the members of the congregation into a real brotherhood. More, it has brought back members who have drifted away. It is able to clarify the aims of the pastor, lists the needs of the church, and cheers the workers on to attain the goals set for them.

This Parish Paper is not the "home-made" Parish announcement which is turned out from time to time by some member of the church on a duplicating device of one kind or another. These messages, blurred and in parts illegible, are hardly the messenger to send out as the representative of the church.

Business men know that their stationery must be of the best quality, well designed and well printed if it is to favorably impress the person who receives it and makes him believe the firm using it is reputable and trustworthy. The church cannot afford to use carelessly prepared and poorly printed announcements.

The time required for preparing the copy for The National Religious Press to print it in a manner worthy of the prestige of the church is far less than is required to run announcements on a duplicator. The finished product of the duplicator or of the small-town printer is not to be compared to the masterly work of the National Religious Press.



The forces of anti-religion are stronger than at any time since the dawn of Christianity. Newspapers, the motion pictures and modern literature are subjecting the children of today to a barrage stronger than their parents and grandparents experienced in a lifetime. To counteract these influences, what better defense can you find than the local Church Paper that goes into the home, to be read and kept long after the newspaper and light magazines have been thrown away? In the Church Paper the eternal truths can be repeated again and again.

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Sermons—Short or Long?

By Edward Bragg

A YOUNG relative of Sir Henry Irvine was appointed by Prime Minister Disraeli as one of the curates at Windsor, the Royal Chapel. One day he found himself in great distress because as he said, "The unexpected has happened. Everyone has dropped out, and I have been ordered to preach on Sunday." He was taken by Sir Henry to Disraeli for advice and received the following: "If you preach thirty minutes Her Majesty will be bored. If you preach ten minutes Her Majesty will be delighted." "But, my lord," said the clergyman, "what can a preacher possibly say in ten minutes?" "That," answered the statesman, "will be a matter of indifference to Her Majesty."[1]

Another royal story is told in the Duke of Windsor's autobiography *A King's Story* in which the Duke describes the Royal Family at worship on Sunday mornings and remembers that when the King was present the sermon was only ten minutes in length, which was regarded as sufficient by His Majesty!

There are, I imagine, many like the members of the Royal Family referred to who find a sermon of ten minutes quite long enough, to whom it would seem that minutes matter more than the message. P. T. Barnum once admitted: "Now I am told there are some churches where the music is so good, and the sermons are so short that one can almost be happy there."

Dr. John McNab, ex-moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, returned from a visit to Britain and related that while over there he worshiped in two small Highland parishes. "At Nethy Bridge, we heard an excellent sermon by Ian MacAllister, 16 minutes. The Rev. Kenneth Wright gave a sparkling address at Boat of Garton. Highland ministers do not preach long sermons as the two divines occupied only 33 minutes."[2]

One perhaps can be thankful that the days of long, long sermons are over or, shall we say, no longer demanded in many places. But ministers should be on guard lest they become mere "preacherettes with sermonettes for sinnerettes."

Hourglass Sermons

It is, of course, a relief for the preacher today that he has no longer to be guided and timed by an hourglass at the side of his pulpit, and it is nice to be known or famous for something other than long-windedness.

In Canada in 1925 there was a union of the Methodist, Congregational and some Presbyterian churches. Many of the Presbyterian churches remained aloof and carried on as before. One continuing Presbyterian minister was addressing a meeting some time ago and evidently went over his allotted time. A former Methodist preacher had to follow him and he prefaced his speech thus: "Until just now I was somewhat puzzled that a denomination should speak of itself as 'continuing,' but I have to admit that the word was well chosen."

Early in his ministry, Albert Schweitzer preached such short sermons at St. Nicholas' where he was a curate, that the people were led to complain. "My afternoon sermons . . . were so short," he writes, "that on one occasion certain circles of the congregation lodged a complaint against me on the subject before Mr. Knittel (a senior minister on the staff) who also held the office of 'Inspector in Spiritual Matters,' and he had to cite me before him. But when I appeared he was as much embarrassed as I was. When he asked what he was to reply to the aggrieved members of the congregation, I replied that he might say that I was only a poor curate who stopped speaking when he found he had nothing more to say about the text. Thereupon he dismissed me with a mild reprimand, and an admonition not to preach for less than twenty minutes."[3]

How many ministers, I wonder, have been so complained about? I have only known one other but I have reason to suspect that in his case there were other shortcomings about which his people did not have the courage to speak and only made his brevity of speech an excuse to get rid of him.

Anglican preaching has had the reputation for being, on the whole, shorter than that from nonconformist pulpits, although there have been and are some Anglican preachers who preach regardless of the clock. One such was the late Dr. Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury. On one occasion, so D. R. Davies tells us, the Archbishop was preaching in St. John's, Newlands, Hull, where Davies was a curate. "He preached for about twenty-five or 30 minutes. As I helped him to unrobe after the service, he remarked that he had preached rather a long time. I energetically disagreed with him. I told him that I couldn't help feeling that the Anglican lust for brevity was killing the very possibility of great preaching. 'Brevity,' I said, quoting Forsyth, 'may be the soul of wit, but the preacher is not a wit.' He warmly agreed. It was then that he said that so much preaching had degenerated into pulpit chatting." Davies then related to the Archbishop an experience of his own which was as follows: "My first vicar was a little anxious, at first, lest I might preach too long, with my Free Church training. He impressed upon me that he had accustomed his congregations (which were large) to fifteen-minute sermons. I didn't say anything, but I silently registered a determination that I would resist to the death the tyranny of the short sermon. So I started with thirty-minute sermons, and continued. After this had been going on for some time, my vicar (who had suffered my long sermons in silence) said to me one day: 'I've heard a great joke against you. I was visiting Mr. X today in Y Avenue. He told me that last Sun-

[1] Ezra, "Methodist Table Talk," *Methodist Recorder*, London. Used by permission.

[2] Dr. John McNab, *The Presbyterian Record*, October 1958, Toronto, Ontario. Used by permission.

[3] Albert Schweitzer, *My Life and Thought* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1948). Used by permission.

EDWARD BRAGG, *a native of England, is minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Aurora, Ontario, Canada. For ten years he was a missionary of the Presbyterian Church of Canada among the East Indians of British Guiana, South America. Then in 1952, he became minister of St. Andrew's Kirk (Church of Scotland) in Nassau in the Bahamas.*

r morning his wife wanted to know o was preaching at Matins, the vicar the curate. When I told her that . Davies was the preacher that rning, she said that in that case would be safer to put the joint the oven *half an hour later.* Ha! !' 'But, vicar,' I said, 'the joke is you. She did not say: In that case von't go to Church.'"[4]

This incident, says Davies, proves t you can train a congregation to en for half an hour. Dr. Temple s obviously of the same opinion for said: "I'm sure a man can train people to listen for as long as he s something to say."[5]

It is of interest to read that Hugh urne, founder of the Primitive thodist Church (early 19th century) oked with disfavor on long preach-g, and he attributed a certain preach-s "run down" circuit to the excessive ngth of the sermons. "He preached igion into folks, and then preached out again,"[6] was his comment. And one of the early Primitive Meth-ist Conferences it was decided that ery traveling preacher "trespassing long preaching" should have ten illings taken from his quarterly al-wance, and given to the charitable nd!

Trespassers

One hearer, who on being asked he did not think the sermon of a ottish preacher long, replied, "Na, shuld nae hae thoght it lang an' I been sitting on thorns."[7] That eacher surely had something to say, id so the time factor did not come to the situation.

The oft-quoted admonition "Stand , speak up, shut up" may be ap-icable for chairmen of meetings and embers of committees, but it should ot be required of preachers who have mething to say and who know how say it. One is reminded of George ernard Shaw's remark at the end the preface to his *Saint Joan:* What matters is not the absolute time ccupied by a play, but the speed with hich that time passes."[8] And what true of a play is equally true of a rmon.

Harry Emerson Fosdick hardly ever reached for less than thirty minutes, nd I have heard Leslie Weatherhead reach for forty-five. But it did not em that long, and surely one of the reatest compliments a preacher can e paid is to be told after a sermon thirty minutes or more, "I was rry when you finished, Reverend; could have gone on listening."

[4] D. R. Davies, *London Quarterly,* October 48 (London: The Epworth Press). Used by rmission.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Douglas Wollen, *The Preachers' Quarterly,* ptember 1958 (London: The Epworth Press). ed by permission.

[7] Dean Ramsay, *Scottish Life and Character* ondon: Cassell & Co., Ltd., 1909). Used by rmission.

[8] Reprinted by permission of The Public rustee and the Society of Authors, London.

Perhaps this article could have no better ending than the Scottish story by Dean Ramsay in his *Scottish Life and Character* of the minister who was taking to task one of his hearers who was a frequent defaulter, and was reproaching him as a habitual absentee from public worship. The accused vindicated himself on the plea of a dislike for long sermons. "'Deed, man," said his reverend monitor, a little nettled at the insinuation thrown out against him, "if ye dinna mend, ye may land yersell where ye'll no be troubled wi' mony sermons either lang or short." "Weel, aiblins sae," retorted John, "but it may na be for want o' ministers."[9]

[9] *Op. cit.*

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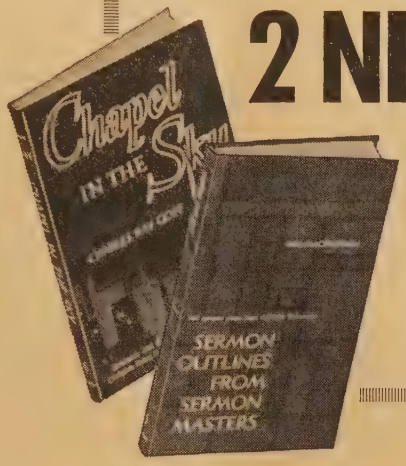

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When Do *I* Get to Preach?

By Dwight E. Stevenson

PERHAPS I am viewing my own generation with characteristic myopia, but it seems to me that the last great preachers in America were graduated from the seminaries before World War I. Most of these men are now retired or will be shortly. With their disappearance we are left with a new generation of ecclesiastical organization men in command of the field. Young men who were graduated from the seminaries in the past five years and others who are now in school have found their gospel and could revive the great pulpit tradition, but if they do so it will be against many strong currents now prevalent both within the church and secular society.

There are several of these forces. There is the progressive conformism which makes prophetic nonconformism almost indecent. The problem of the freedom of the pulpit simply does not arise in many churches because freedom is so seldom exercised. Ministers may be counted on to keep in line, to mirror Washington or Radio City.

There is the hypnotic spell cast by organizational efficiency. And since any minister worth his salt has a staff these days, he becomes the executive of an organization with boards, committees, plans and projects. The survival of the sermon in this atmosphere of mimeographs, addressographs, filing cabinets and committee meetings is becoming daily more doubtful. Long ago the minister's study turned into an office, and if you want to inquire about the fate of the sermon, one answer is that it was choked to death by the mimeograph machine.

There is also the new art of communication — and, blessing of blessings, group dynamics. Everyone who does not want to be called Victorian knows that "one-way communication" simply does not get across. As one religious educator said in my hearing, "We all know that you can't change people by preaching to them." Apparently Peter made a prime mistake at Pentecost and John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards were fairly misguided at Aldersgate and Enfield. Character cannot be changed out of community; this is true. But sometimes the most burning sense of community to be experienced is that which exists between a preacher on fire and a hearer who allows no word to hit the wall or bounce on the floor. To change people, preaching must be done passionately by men who believe in it and who prepare to do it. But as things stand now some of them are wondering if they had better not call the whole thing off and institute a Sunday morning buzz session.

Ready-made Series

Each of the foregoing hurdles to a revival of preaching is worth serious elaboration, but at present I should like to direct my remarks at an obstacle of a different kind. This is the promotional efficiency of denominational headquarters and of interchurch and church-related agencies. Streams of mail from a dozen sources flood the minister's desk with appeals to be presented from the pulpit. Since the boards and agencies have sense enough to know that they are competing for a busy pastor's attention, many of them have the grace to offer up their material in predigested form, replete with sermon title, text, outline, illustrations and conveniently sifted source material. Sometimes they even supply full manuscripts, and these not for one but for series of sermons!

I have not made a count of these homiletical services, but I think that any alert pastor who carefully culled his mail would find himself in possession of ready-made sermons for at least a half of the Sundays in a year. At the present rate of progress, the second half of the year will be cared for shortly. Then the only homiletical training a minister will need will be a guide on how to use the denominational and agency manuals.

A conscientious minister who wants to promote all these worthy causes — and all are worthy — finds his preaching year eaten away until he wonders, "When do *I* get to preach?" And, what is sadder still, he frequently loses the desire to do his own thinking and settles down to the safe if uncreative role of being a good organization man.

Four Rules

What is to be done?

Rule number one is to *memorize Phillips Brooks' definition of a sermon:*

> Preaching is the communication of truth by man to men. It has in it two essential elements, truth and personality. Neither of these can it spare and still be preaching. . . The truth must come truly through the person, not merely over his lips, not merely into his understanding and out through his pen or lips. It must come through his character, his affections, his whole intellectual and moral being. It must come genuinely through him. I think that, granted equal intelligence and study, here is the great difference which we find between two preachers of the Word. The Gospel has come *over* one of them and reaches us tinged and flavored with his superficial characteristics, belittled by his littleness. The Gospel has come through the other, and we receive it impressed and winged with all the earnestness and strength that is in him.

It is a simple fact that no man can *preach* another man's sermon, no matter how good it is. He may mouth it, recite it, declaim it; but he cannot preach it. For preaching, to quote Harry Emerson Fosdick, "is drenching a congregation with your life blood." And this is not blood; it is only printer's ink.

Following the implications of rule number one we come to rule number two: *Consign all promotional sermon outlines and manuscripts immediately to the wastebasket.* Do not give them desk room even for a minute. Even if they come from the bishop or the moderator of the annual convention, put them at once in file thirteen.

Rule number three: *Never preach a purely promotional sermon; never use sermon time for purely institution-*

DWIGHT E. STEVENSON, *professor of homiletics at The College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky, was formerly minister of Bethany Memorial Church, Bethany, West Virginia, and professor of religion and philosophy at Bethany College. A graduate of Bethany College and Yale Divinity School, Dr. Stevenson is author of several religious books and coauthor, with Charles F. Diehl, of* Reaching People from the Pulpit.

ds. These matters have to be pre-
d; many of them are urgent. But
of them can be presented through
church paper, or through the
orized organizational channels.
others can be handled in brief
arefully prepared oral announce-
s. I once knew a minister who
ionally conveyed announcements
is pastoral prayers. One Sunday
rayed, "O Lord, we trust that we
have a goodly attendance at our
ch supper on Wednesday night at
the price of which is 75 cents."
lo a thing like this is indecent.
it is no more indecent than allow-
n announcement about the build-
und to pre-empt the sermon time.
sermon belongs to the gospel; it
opportunity for God's Word to
his people, and the end it should
ys have in view is the redemption
nurturing of *people,* not the at-
nent of institutional goals.
ule number four now becomes nec-
y and obvious: *Get into your*
y (and don't confuse it with the
e), *and shut the door. Read, write*
think four hours a day, five days
eek. Then you will learn what it
wed truth to personality, and to
e people toward God, because you
self have been moved.

Pulpit Calendar

Mar 2 — Ash Wednesday.
Mar. 4 — World Day of Prayer.
Mar. 6 — 1st Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 13 — 2nd Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 20 — 3rd Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 25 — The Annunciation.
Mar. 27 — 4th Sunday in Lent.

Apr. 3 — Passion Sunday.
Apr. 10 — Palm Sunday.
Apr. 10-16 — Holy Week.
Apr. 14 — Maundy Thursday.
Apr. 15 — Good Friday.
Apr. 17 — Easter.
Apr. 24 — 1st Sunday after Easter. National Christian College Day.

May 1 — 2nd Sunday after Easter.
May 1-8 — National Family Week.
May 8 — Festival of the Christian Home. (Mother's Day).
May 15 — 4th Sunday after Easter.
May 22 — Rural Life Sunday.
May 26 — Ascension Day.
May 29 — Sunday after Ascension Day.
May 30 — Memorial Day.

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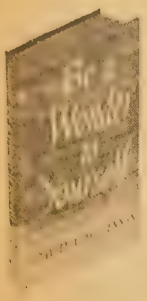

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Book Reviews

YOU SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. *By Edwin M. Good. Westminster. $1.50.*

JESUS AND GOD'S NEW PEOPLE. *By Howard Clark Kee. Westminster. $1.50.*

THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS. *By Emil Brunner. Westminster. $3.50.*

A SHORTER COMMENTARY ON ROMANS. *By Karl Barth. John Knox. $3.00.*

WHAT kind of help, if any, does the Christian need today in enabling him to read his Bible? Will the Word of God come to him without the use of any secondary sources? How does one move from a sprightly book about the relevance of the Bible to a careful, critical and reverent reading of the Bible itself? The books listed above represent two possible answers to these questions.

The first two listed are the first-published titles in the new Westminster Press Guides to the Bible, under the general editorship of Professor Good of Stanford. A word of deep gratitude to Paul Meacham and the Westminster Press is surely in order both for their older Library of Layman's Theology and this new series. This press is breaking new ground and has discerned a real need in the church today.

You Shall Be My People is a guide to the Pentateuch, Genesis to Deuteronomy. It is an interpretation based on the exodus-covenant event, so it begins with the exodus and concludes with the creation. It seems to me supremely successful in what it sets out to do. It orders the material beautifully, the style is clear and incisive without falling into the pitfalls of some pseudocute "writing for the layman." Old Testament Bible study in the churches is moderately rare; I see no reason why it needs to be now. This book is far and away the best guide now available for student and church groups to help them move into the riches of the thought of Israel.

Professor Kee of Drew is one of the finest young New Testament theologians in America today, and to his lot in this series has fallen the most difficult assignment of all, to introduce the Gospels in ninety-two pages. *Jesus and God's New People* does just this. There is a chapter on the relation of history and interpretation in the Gospels, an excellent chapter on the gospel before the written Gospels appeared, and a chapter each — tragically but inevitably brief — on each of the four Gospels. This book is done with the care and lucidity we have come to expect from Dr. Kee, and is a very valuable study guide. My comments are two, however: First, I am not convinced that the brief treatment given the Gospels themselves is really sufficient as a guide to careful Bible study, individual or group, unless there is professional leadership, and this is rarely a good idea. Dr. Kee had no choice in the matter; my argument is with the decision to put all four Gospels in a single volume. Second, Dr. Kee is a trifle vague, or perhaps too Bultmannish for my taste. In his first-chapter discussion of facts and faith, he passes too readily from factuality to meaning, and disallows too quickly the real (if unbiblical) question that modern man must put to the New Testament record: Did it happen?

The two remaining volumes listed above represent a different type of study material, but they are books for the church and not just the professionals. Dr. Barth's book is not an edited version of his first *Epistle to the Romans.* It is a new study, a series of addresses given to a nontheological audience in 1940. The note that sounds in this newer exposition from start to finish is that of sanctification, triumphant grace and redemption already accomplished and available now. Here is a good look at what we are probably wrongly calling the "later" Barth, the merry Mozartian, the free Christian man praising God for his

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g freedom and peace. Barth's
nents on 8:1 remind us how cen-
o his theology is his curious and
essive doctrine of election. This
is one that is indeed available
ne student of the Bible in the
ch. If a group should take up
ans with Barth as a guide, it
d find this exposition a simple
powerful witness to the victory
God, already won, over distress,
onsciousness and unbelief.

. Brunner's little book (originally
ished in 1936) may be slightly less
esting to read than Barth's, but
may be for the very good reason
there is less of the author himself
more of Paul in it. To be sure,
reader will detect some favorite
nes of Brunner: the relation of
h and love, the noninstitutional
re of the church, and so on. But
ne main, Brunner's book is a model
ound, obedient theological exegesis,
nd always to the text and to the
tle's intent. It will come as no
rise to discover that Brunner finds
Romans 9-11 his doctrine of elec-
, just as Barth finds there his own.
add to the interest in comparing
e two masterly books, it may be
her said that Brunner's views on
tion are probably closer to Paul,
Barth's may be closer to the truth.
usefulness to the laity of Brun-
s book is greatly increased by a
erb appendix containing brief defi-
ons of Paul's key theological terms.
our very fine books — two by
ng men, two by very distinguished
ters. This kind of service by the
ologian to the church is a very
rtening sign. — *William Hamilton,*
gate Rochester Divinity School,
hester, New York.

LOSOPHY OF THE BUDDHA. *By Archie*
. Bahm. Harper. $3.00.

MAGINE a Buddhist scholar, for
some years a student of Western
gious thought, spending a year in
s country under the auspices of his
ernment. Imagine, further, that
purpose is to reconstruct the
ilosophy of Christ, that is, the essen-
thought, the basic teachings of
historical Jesus. If we suppose
t this imaginary scholar published
conclusions, such a book would
present in reverse what *Philosophy*
the Buddha purports to be. For
author, Professor of Philosophy
the University of New Mexico, has
ently spent a year, on a Fulbright
nt, studying Buddhist thought at
University of Rangoon. And "the
rpose of this book is to state the
ilosophy of Gotama, the man him-
f, by means of quotations from the
akas themselves."

Whether the recovery of the ideas
the historical Gotama is essentially
ess formidable undertaking than re-
nstructing the thought of the his-
ical Jesus, or even of the his-
ical Socrates, is perhaps beside the
int. In any case, Professor Bahm
has been remarkably successful in presenting the core of Buddhist thought. The book is filled with superb quotations, convincingly used. One gem: "Be ye not measurers of persons, take not the measure of persons. A person is ruined by taking the measure of other persons." The plainness and relevance of Gotama's teachings are brought out with great effectiveness in the discussion of the distinction between desire and craving, the meaning of Nirvana, "greed for views" and other concepts.

The two dominant themes of the book are both expressed in these words: "Gotama's philosophy may be summed up in a simple, clear and obvious principle, which immediately compels belief once it is understood. The principle: Desire for what will not be attained ends in frustration; therefore, to avoid frustration, avoid desiring what will not be attained." This reviewer is willing to admit that Professor Bahm has made his case regarding one theme: that the acceptance of things as they are is Gotama's "single ultimate principle" and that the Middle Way is its dialectical strategy.

This reviewer must, however, take exception to the other theme: "Everyone is a Buddhist! . . . the teachings of Gotama contain principles which everyone accepts, once he stops to think about them." If this is like saying that everyone is a Christian who

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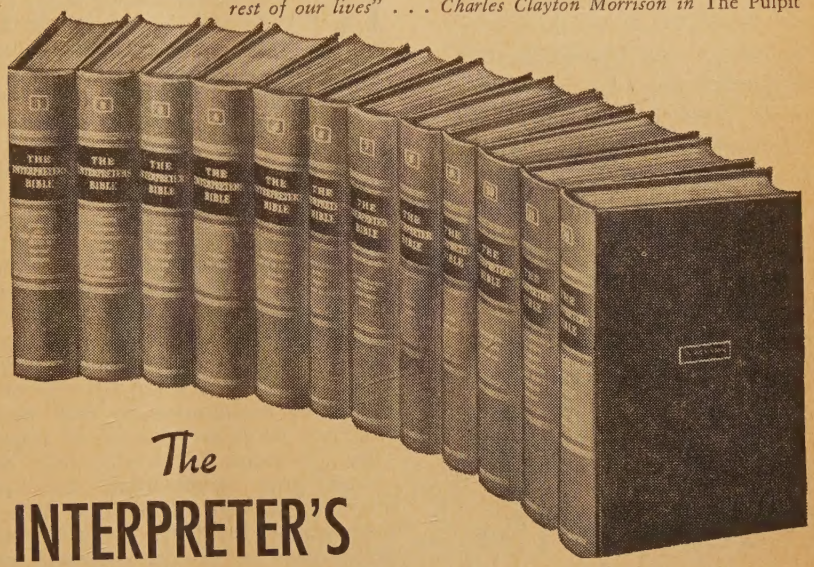

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* Volumes VII, VIII, and IX are especially helpful for studying the International Sunday School Lessons for the first and second quarters of 1960.

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accepts the principle of the worth of human personality, it is merely loose language. But Professor Bahm seems to mean more than this: that the truth of Gotama's philosophy is "immediately obvious." If this core of Buddhist thought involves (1) egocentric presuppositions and (2) the assumption that the real is unconcerned about man's salvation, then it is not obvious that "it holds true for all men at all times." Even in the brilliant form in which this book puts it, Gotama's philosophy is both psychologically and theologically open to question. — *John Hillman Lavely, professor of philosophy, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts.*

CHURCH USE OF AUDIO-VISUALS. *By Howard E. Tower. Abingdon. $1.50, paper.*

HAVING invested a bit of my own hard-earned capital in the first edition of Mr. Tower's work, it must follow that I thought enough of it to make it a member of my library. And I did. That much is unsolicited testimony. I now have the privilege of owning the new revised edition. But before setting it in its proper place on the bookshelf, a few comments on this paperback revision.

My over-all impression is that Mr. Tower has compiled an authoritative, usable and sensible book. However, I still harbor a secret wish that somehow, somewhere, somebody could come up with a title for this vital area of church communication that would lift it to its proper station of importance. Perhaps familiarity with the prosaic term "audio-visual" has bred contempt as well as lethargy. This is one area of church life towards which there must be neither contempt nor lethargy.

Howard Tower's words on technique are excellent and should be studied carefully. However, technique is not enough and perhaps more should have been said of a critical appraisal of materials used. Much of the too-highly-rated religious A-V materials seem more on the level of the old approach to westerns, à la Gene Autry and Tom Mix rather than an adult, mature approach that informs as well as challenges and entertains. Let's use our audio-visuals correctly and Tower's book goes a long way toward that goal; but let's produce them correctly too. As long as the local churches continue to soak up anything that is put out just because it is in color or has sound or authentic backgrounds, the producers of much of this "pap" will continue to grind it out. The danger pointed out by the author concerning films just for entertainment or in place of the lesson might then be lessened. At least it's worth a try.

Perhaps Mr. Tower's carefully drawn warning concerning our motivation for the use of a picture as merely laying the foundation for discussion or consideration rather than in itself

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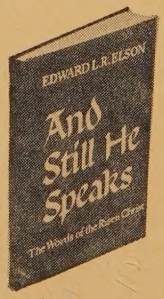

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ivating to action is at least partially
result of inferior materials. His
ings as to misuse of materials are
inly well-taken.
e chapter entitled "An Adequate
sophy" is one worth headlining.
he author states, "we should use
ture not because it is a picture
ecause it brings to our group an
rience that is different in kind
uality from the experience any
type of material would bring."
his might be added that this is *a*
and not *the* tool in Christian edu-
n but a tool of such importance
the church which approaches its
casually or unimaginatively is rob-
its members of a vital step in a
inual learning process.
hile cost is an ever-present shadow
many considerations of a church,
encouraging to find in this book
ce on which audio-visual tools to
advice based on use rather than
Churches too try to keep up with
Joneses, whether their needs or
get can or not.
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io-Visuals in the Group Process"
"The Role of the Church in the
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thy appendages. Several creative
gestions are given as to actual group
of films.
rom the beginning to the end the
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t into the major task of the church
ch is communication. These are
l-given media of communication
the reader senses Mr. Tower's
nderment at any church which can
sider its holy task fulfilled and yet
use or use carelessly such magnifi-
t tools. This is a book which can
dy our steps on the path towards
ater fulfillment of our divinely-
ointed rounds as reverently, care-
y and intelligently we drill deeper
the vast well of resource known
the "Church Use of Audio-Visuals."
Robert E. Peterson, Western Hills
ristian Church, San Antonio, Texas.

Memo

(Continued from page 3)

pressions doggedly and one by
e. . . . To create or to experience
one must be technically and emo-
nally fluent. . . . Unless the writer
l the reader have in common the
cessary language of simultaneity in
millions of shadings, the best will
enroute."
Fluency so understood is certainly
great part of what makes any art
particular and art in general so pow-
ul. By perceptive selection and sen-
ve arrangement it is possible to
et — not just talk about — a person,
event, a situation. When a work
art is great, it is organic; the selec-
n of detail and the variety of mean-
s are so interrelated and co-ordi-
ed that the work seems to — and
es — take on a life of its own. As
Robert Frost has noted in a wondrous bit, "Like a piece of ice on a hot stove, the poem must ride on its own melting."

Now, does this mean that every sermon must be a poem? No, it means that the sermon as a form of communication is not exempt from this kind of demand. Apart from content, most sermons err in three ways, all related to "fluency": they are too doggedly analytical, their ideas and illustrative material have little organic relationship or connecting rhythm, or they are too simple. This does not mean that analysis, discontinuity and simplicity are not real and important; it does mean that if sermonic effort is given over entirely to their limitation, "the best will die en route."

Among other foci of artistic truth which powerfully inform homiletics are *performance* and *style*. No preacher should ever surrender to the kind of naive understanding of the gospel which permits him to avoid the truth that his sermon must "perform" and so must he. Better to face and assimilate that fact than to fall into the horrendous patterns of unconscious mannerisms that usually belong to "spontaneous delivery." As for style — space here has long since run out, and besides one could hardly do better than to get and read *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White, now published in paperback by the Macmillan Company. The cliché — "You can't afford to be without one" — finds literal fulfillment in this little book.

Is preaching really a lost art? It may be, it could be — the question is that serious. That it *need not be* is the deeper seriousness of the question.

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